三国志 ㉒

横山光輝

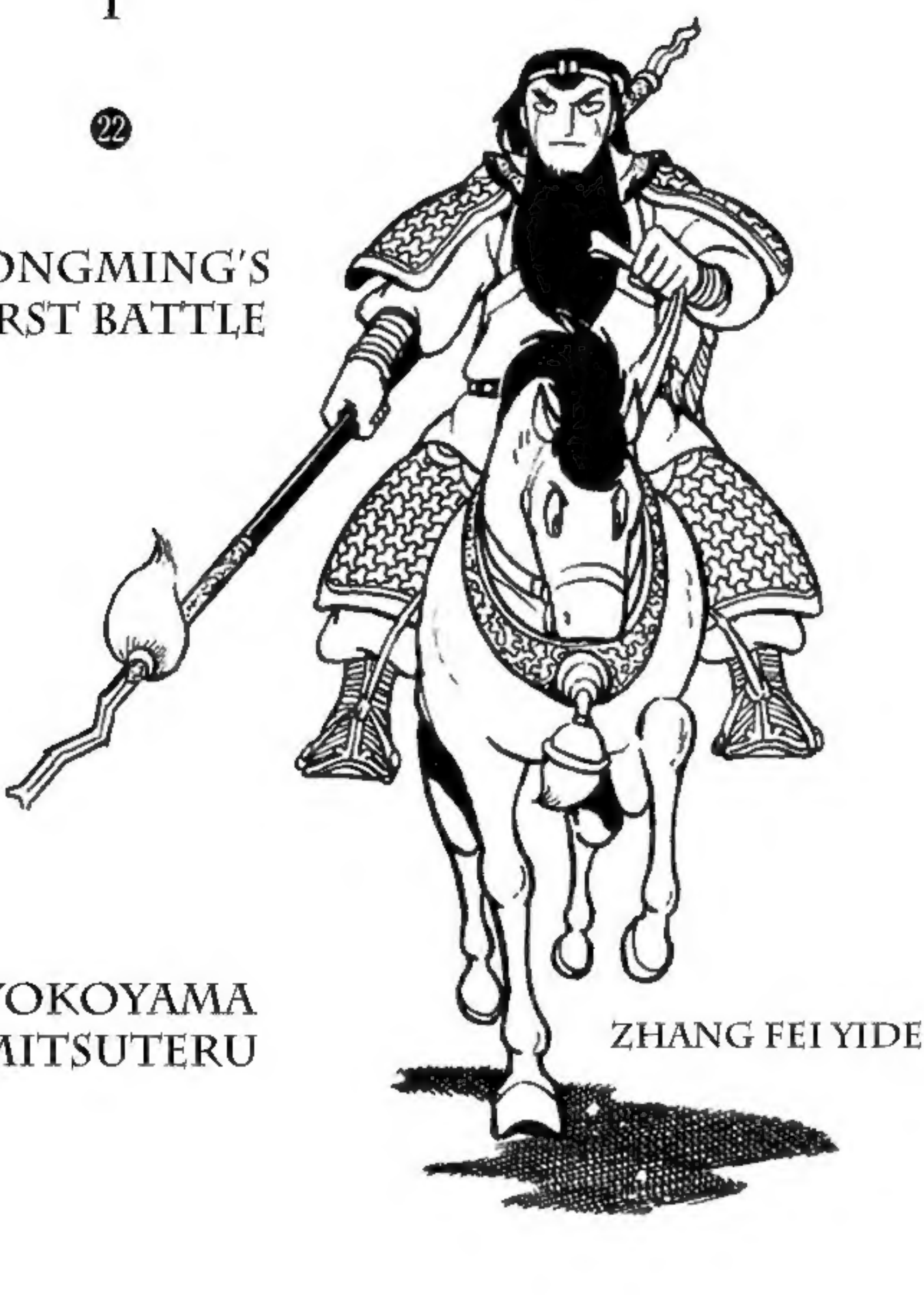
初陣孔明

希望コミックス75

SANGOKUSHI

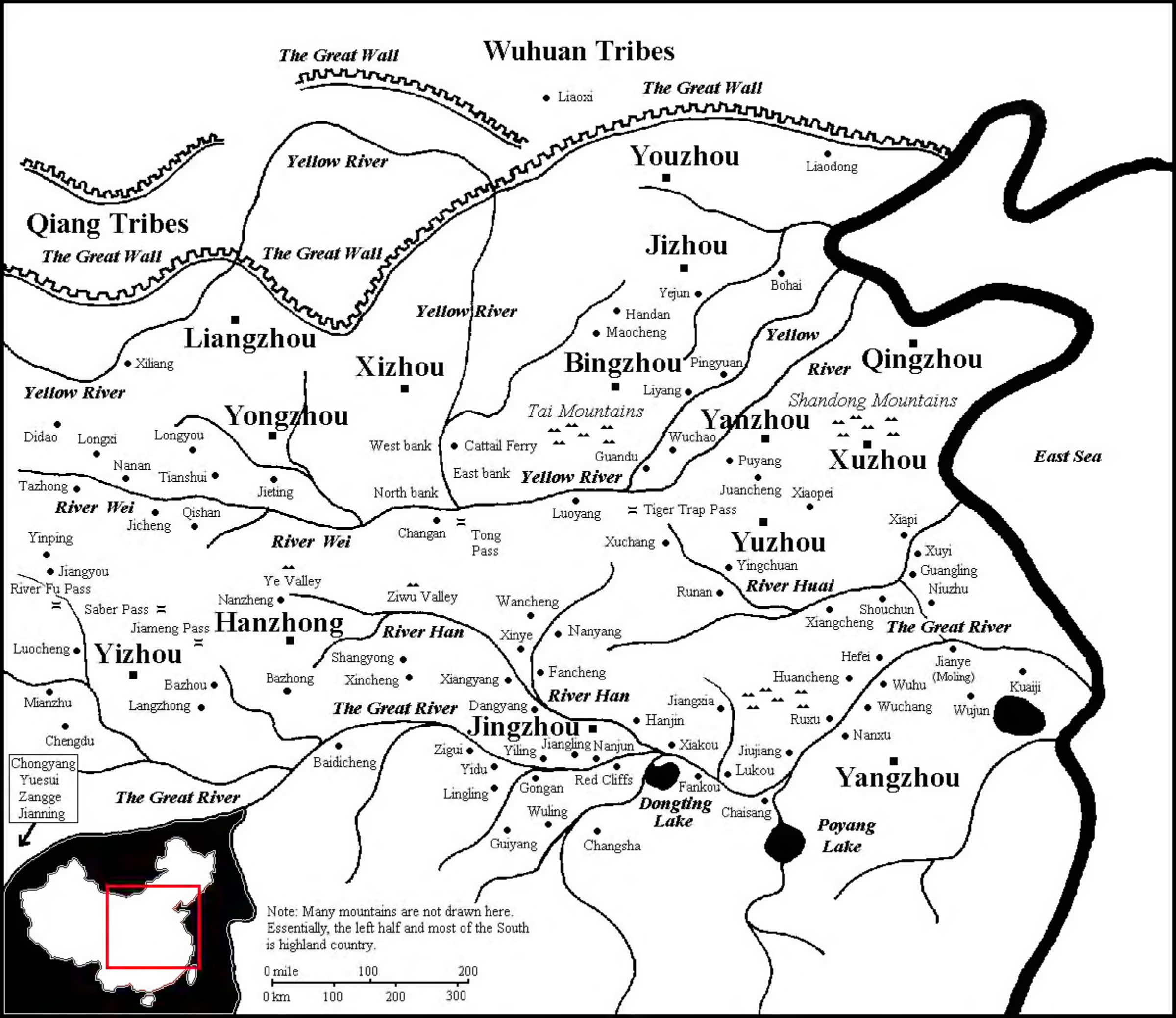
22

KONGMING'S FIRST BATTLE



YOKOYAMA MITSUTERU

ZHANG FEI YIDE


Wuhuan Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Liaoxi
Youzhou
Liaodong
Yellow River
Qiang Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Jizhou
Bohai
Yejun
Handan
Maocheng
Yellow River
Liangzhou
Xizhou
Bingzhou
Pingyuan
Yellow River
Qingzhou
Xiliang
Yellow River
Liyang
Shandong Mountains
Tai Mountains
Yongzhou
Yanzhou
Didao
Longxi
Longyou
West bank
Cattail Ferry
Wuchao
Guandu
Xuzhou
East Sea
Nanan
East bank
Yellow River
Puyang
Tianshui
Tazhong
Jieting
North bank
Juancheng
Xiaopei
River Wei
Qishan
Luoyang
Tiger Trap Pass
Jicheng
Changan
Tong Pass
Xiapi
Yuzhou
Yinping
River Wei
Xuchang
Xuyi
Jiangyou
Ye Valley
Yingchuan
Guangling
River Fu Pass
Ziwu Valley
Runan
River Huai
Niuzhu
Saber Pass
Nanzheng
Wancheng
Shouchun
Jiameng Pass
Hanzhong
River Han
Xinye
Nanyang
Xiangcheng
The Great River
Luocheng
Yizhou
Shangyong
Hefei
Jianye (Moling)
Fancheng
Huancheng
Bazhou
Bazhong
Xincheng
Xiangyang
Wuhu
Kuaiji
River Han
Jiangxia
Mianzhu
Langzhong
The Great River
Dangyang
Wuchang
Wujun
Ruxu
Hanjin
Jingzhou
Chengdu
Nanxu
Zigui
Yiling
Jiangling
Nanjun
Xiakou
Jiujiang
Baidicheng
Yidu
Lukou
Yangzhou
Chongyang
Yuesui
Zangge
Jianning
Red Cliffs
Fankou
Gongan
Lingling
Dongting Lake
Chaisang
Wuling
Poyang Lake
Guiyang
Changsha
The Great River
Note: Many mountains are not drawn here.
Essentially, the left half and most of the South
is highland country.
0 mile 100 200
0 km 100 200 300

SANGOKUSHI'S CAST OF CHARACTERS

PART 1: CHARACTERS TO KEEP IN MIND

CAO CAO MENGDE:
THE AMBITIOUS AND MACHIAVELLIAN HERO OF SANGOKUSHI. HAVING BECOME THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, HE HAS RELEGATED EMPEROR XIAN AS A MERE PUPPET RULER. AS OF VOLUME 20, HE HAS DEFEATED YUAN SHAO, BRINGING ALL OF NORTHERN CHINA UNDER HIS CONTROL.

CHEN DENG:
THE SON OF CHEN GUI AND FORMERLY TAO QIAN OF XUZHOU'S SUBORDINATE. HE AND HIS FATHER SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL.

CHEN GUI:
FATHER OF CHEN DENG WHO SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL. DESPITE SECRETLY WORKING TOGETHER WITH LIU BEI AGAINST CAO CAO, CAO CAO SPARES HIS LIFE AND ALLOWS HIM TO CONTINUE LIVING IN XUZHOU.

CHENG GONG:
A CITY GUARD CAPTAIN WHO ARRESTED CAO CAO, ONLY TO FREE AND ESCAPE WITH HIM AFTER SYMPATHIZING WITH HIS STORY. HOWEVER, HE LATER DEFECTS TO LU BU AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR. IN VOLUME 14, HE IS EXECUTED ALONG WITH LU BU.

EMPRESS HE:
ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HER BEAUTY WAS NOTICED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS WHO THEN PRESENTED HER TO EMPEROR LING. SHE SOON BECAME EMPEROR LING'S FAVOURITE CONSORT AND GAVE BIRTH TO PRINCE LIU BIAN. HOWEVER, SHE AND HER SON WERE REMOVED FROM POWER AND KILLED BY LI RU WHEN DONG ZHUO CAME TO POWER.

DIAN WEI:
CAO CAO'S PERSONAL BODYGUARD, RENOWNED FOR HIS STRENGTH. HE IS ALSO KNOWN BY THE NICKNAME, "E LAI," IN REFERENCE TO THE MIGHT GENERAL OF THE SAME NAME WHO SERVED UNDER KING ZHOU OF SHANG. IN VOLUME 12, HE WAS KILLED DURING ZHANG XIU'S PLOT TO KILL CAO CAO.

DIAO CHAN:
A SLAVE GIRL OF WANG YUN, WHO RAISED HER AS HIS OWN DAUGHTER. SHE AND WANG YUN PLOTTED TO DISTANCE LU BU FROM DONG ZHUO BY HAVING HER SEDUCE BOTH MEN. IN VOLUME 8, SHE COMMITTED SUICIDE AFTER ACCOMPLISHING HER GOAL.

DONG CHENG:
ELDER STATESMAN OF HAN WHO IS EMPEROR XIAN'S CONFIDANT. EMPEROR XIAN SECRETELY ASKS HIM TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO, WHO NOW RULES THE IMPERIAL COURT AS CHANCELLOR. IN VOLUME 17, HE IS EXECUTED AFTER HIS ASSASSINATION PLOT IS FOUND OUT BY CAO CAO.

DONG ZHUO:
GOVERNOR OF LIANGZHOU WHO LATER SEIZED CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND SEATED HIMSELF AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, BECOMING AN INFAMOUS TYRANT. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS RIGHT-HAND MAN, LU BU.

GONGSUN ZAN:
GOVERNOR OF BEIPING AND FRIEND TO LIU BEI. HE WAGES WAR AGAINST YUAN SHAO AFTER THE LATTER TRICKS HIM AND KILLS HIS YOUNG BROTHER. IN VOLUME 15, YUAN SHAO'S ARMY CONQUERS BEIPING, CAUSING GONGSUN ZAN TO COMMIT SUICIDE.

GUAN YU YUNCHANG:
SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER TO LIU BEI AND SWORN OLDER BROTHER TO ZHANG FEI. HE IS AS FIERCE AS GUAN YU BUT IS MORE RESTRAINED AND CALM IN HIS MANNERISMS.

GUAN PING:
GUAN YU'S ADOPTED SON. ADOPTED IN VOLUME 19.

GUO JIA:
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO CAO CAO. HE DIES FROM ILLNESS DURING CAO CAO'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE YUAN FAMILY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

JIA XU:
THE SHREWD STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO ZHANG XIU. HE AND ZHANG XIU PLOTS A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON CAO CAO, BUT SUCCEEDS IN KILLING DIAN WEI. IN VOLUME 16, HE AND ZHANG XIU DEFECT TO CAO CAO'S SIDE.

LI RU:
CUNNING ADVISOR TO DONG ZHUO. WITH HIS ADVICE, DONG ZHUO FIRMLY SECURES HIS SEAT AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS KILLED ALONG WITH DONG ZHUO WHEN LU BU REBELS.

LIU BEI XUANDE:
THE CENTRAL CHARACTER OF SANGOKUSHI. A KIND AND VIRTUOUS MAN, SAID TO BE THE DESCENDANT OF EMPEROR JING OF HAN. HE HAS SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD WITH GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI. AFTER LOSING XUZHOU TO CAO CAO, HE IS CURRENTLY UNDER THE CARE OF LIU BIAO.

LIU BIAO:
THE GOVERNOR OF JINGZHOU. HE IS CURRENTLY FACING DOMESTIC TROUBLES OVER THE PROBLEM OF WHICH SON TO MAKE HIS HEIR (LIU QI, LIU CONG).

LIU XIE (EMPEROR XIAN OF HAN):
FORMERLY KNOWN AS PRINCE OF CHENLIU, HE IS THE CURRENT EMPEROR OF HAN. HE BECAME THE EMPEROR WHEN DONG ZHUO FORCIBLY DETHRONED HIS HALF-BROTHER LIU BIAN.

LU BU:
HE IS SAID TO BE THE STRONGEST WARRIOR IN THE LAND WHO RIDES ON THE FASTEST HORSE IN THE LAND, THE RED HARE. IN VOLUME 14, HE WAS BETRAYED BY HIS SUBORDINATES (HOU CHENG, WEI XU, SONG XIAN), WHO HANDED HIM OVER TO CAO CAO. HE BEGS CAO CAO FOR MERCY BUT IS EXECUTED DUE TO LIU BEI'S DISAGREEMENT.

MA TENG:
GOVERNOR OF XILIAN AND FATHER OF MA CHAO. UNLIKE THE ACTUAL HISTORICAL FIGURE, HE IS DEPICTED AS A HAN LOYALIST WHO SIGNS DONG CHENG'S BLOOD SEAL PLEDGE.

SHUI JING:
HIS REAL NAME IS SIMA HUI BUT HE IS MORE COMMONLY KNOWN BY HIS TAOIST NAME, SHUI JING (MEANING WATER MIRROR). HE IS THE TEACHER OF ZHUGE LIANG, PANG TONG, AND XU SHU.

SUN CE:
ELDEST SON OF SUN JIAN. IN VOLUME 19, ASSASSINS MAKE A FAILED ATTEMPT AT HIS LIFE, BUT SUCCEEDS IN SEVERELY WEAKENING HIM. HIS HEALTH DECLINES FURTHER AS HE IS DRIVEN MAD BY THE SPIRIT OF YU JI, WHICH EVENTUALLY LEADS TO HIS DEATH.

SUN JIAN:
BORN IN WU COMMANDERY, HE WAS THE GOVERNOR OF CHANGSHA. IN VOLUME 5, HE PARTICIPATES IN THE ALLIANCE TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO. DURING THIS PERIOD, HE FINDS THE IMPERIAL SEAL, WHICH CAUSES YUAN SHAO AND LIU BIAO TO TURN ON HIM. IN VOLUME 7, HE TRIES TO EXACT HIS REVENGE ON LIU BIAO, ONLY TO BE KILLED IN BATTLED.

SUN QUAN:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF SUN CE. AS OF THE END OF VOLUME 19, HE HAS SUCCEEDED HIS OLDER BROTHER SUN CE AS THE RULER OF WU STATE.

TAISHI CI:
SUN CE'S TRUSTED GENERAL WHO DEFECTED TO SERVE SUN CE AFTER BEING CAPTURED IN VOLUME 11.

TAO QIAN:
THE KIND GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU WHO ACCIDENTALLY INVOKES CAO CAO'S WRATH WHEN HIS DISLOYAL SUBORDINATE ZHANG KAI KILLS CAO CAO'S FATHER, CAO SONG.

THE TEN ATTENDANTS:
A CORRUPT GROUP OF 10 EUNUCHS WHO WERE THE HIGHEST RANKING MINISTERS OF THE IMPERIAL COURT. THEY SUCCEEDED IN ASSASSINATING GENERAL HE JIN BUT WERE LATER KILLED BY HE JIN'S ARMY LED BY YUAN SHAO.

WANG YUN:
AN OLD MAN WHO HOLDS THE POST OF MINISTER OF THE MASSES, ONE OF THE 3 HIGHEST RANKING POSTS IN HAN IMPERIAL COURT. HE SUCCESSFULLY PLOTS DONG ZHUO'S DOWNFALL USING DIAO CHANG IN VOLUME 8. HOWEVER, HE IS LATER KILLED BY REMNANTS OF DONG ZHUO'S ARMY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

WEN CHOU:
HE AND YANG LIANG ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 18, HE IS AMBUSHED BY CAO CAO'S ARMY AND KILLED BY GUAN YU.

XIAHOU DUN:
TRUSTED GENERAL OF CAO CAO. HE LOST HIS LEFT EYE DURING A BATTLE AGAINST LU BU'S ARMY IN VOLUME 13.

XU CHU:
TRUSTED GENERAL OF CAO CAO. ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HE WAS RECRUITED BY CAO CAO WHO WAS IMPRESSED AFTER SEEING XU CHU'S DUEL WITH DIAN WEI.

XU SHU (SHAN FU):
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST WHO STUDIED UNDER SHUI JING. AFTER A BRIEF STINT OF SERVING LIU BEI, HE IS TRICKED INTO COMING TO XUCHANG AND SERVING CAO CAO (VOLUME 21).

XUN YU:
ONE OF CAO CAO'S MOST TALENTED ADVISORS.

YAN LIANG:
HE AND WEN CHOU ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 17, HE WAS KILLED BY GUAN YU WHILE FIGHTING CAO CAO'S ARMY AT BAIMA.

YI JI:
AN ADVISOR TO LIU BIAO WHO WARNS LIU BEI ABOUT CAI MAO'S PLOT TO ASSASSINATE LIU BEI IN VOLUME 20.

YUAN SHAO:
OLDER BROTHER OF YUAN SHU AND THE GOVERNOR OF JIZHOU. AFTER MANY YEARS OF WARRING AGAINST CAO CAO FOR CONTROL OF NORTHERN CHINA, HE AND HIS FAMILY IS DEFEATED AND KILLED.

YUAN SHU:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF YUAN SHAO AND THE GOVERNOR OF NANYANG. AFTER RECEIVING THE IMPERIAL SEAL FROM SUN CE, HE DECLARES HIMSELF AS THE EMPEROR OF ZHONG DYNASTY. IN VOLUME 15, HE DIES OF THIRST AFTER BEING ON THE RUN FROM LIU BEI AND CAO CAO'S ARMIES.

ZHANG FEI YIDE:
A FIRECE, SHORT-TEMPERED WARRIOR WHO IS THE SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER OF LIU BEI AND GUAN YU.

ZHANG LIAO:
ONE OF CAO CAO'S TOP GENERALS. HE WAS FORMERLY LU BU'S SUBORDINATE BUT DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AFTER THE FORMER'S EXECUTION.

ZHANG XIU:
LORD OF WANCHENG WHO ATTEMPTED TO KILL CAO CAO DURING THE BATTLE OF WANCHENG IN VOLUME 12. AFTER YEARS OF CONFLICT AGAINST CAO CAO, HE FINALLY DECIDES TO DEFECT TO CAO CAO IN VOLUME 16.

ZHAO YUN ZILONG:
A FORMER RETAINER TO YUAN SHAO WHO LATER DEFECTED TO SERVE GONGSUN ZAN. AFTER GONGSUN ZAN'S DEATH, HE LATER MEETS UP WITH LIU BEI AND FINALLY BECOMES HIS RETAINER.

ZHOU CANG:
FORMERLY A YELLOW TURBAN, HE MEETS GUAN YU IN VOLUME 18 AND BECOMES HIS SUBORDINATE.

ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING:
MASTERFUL STRATEGIST AND FORMER STUDENT OF SHUI JING. IN VOLUME 21, HE YIELDS TO LIU BEI'S PERSISTENCE AND DECIDES TO BECOME HIS SUBJECT.

SANGOKUSHI'S CAST OF CHARACTERS
PART 2: OTHER MINOR CHARACTERS

CAI MAO:
GENERAL SERVING UNDER LIU BIAO AND UNCLE OF LIU CONG. IN VOLUME 20, BECAUSE LIU BEI ADVISES LIU BIAO TO NAME LIU QI AS THE HEIR OF JINGZHOU INSTEAD OF LIU CONG, CAI MAO ATTEMPTS TO ASSASSINATE LIU BEI.

CAO REN:
GENERAL SERVING UNDER CAO CAO.

CAO HONG:
GENERAL AND COUSIN TO CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 6, HE SAVES CAO CAO FROM CERTAIN DEATH.

CAO SONG:
CAO CAO'S FATHER AND A FORMER GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS KILLED BY TAO QIAN'S ESCORT AND FORMER YELLOW TURBAN, ZHANG KAI.

DING YUAN:
GOVERNOR OF BINGZHOU AND LU BU'S FOSTER-FATHER. HE OBJECTED TO DONG ZHUO'S SCHEME TO PLACE PRINCE CHENLIU AS THE EMPEROR OF HAN, EARNING DONG ZHUO'S WRATH. IN VOLUME 4, HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS FOSTER-SON, LU BU, WHO THEN DEFECTS TO SERVE DONG ZHUO.

EMPRESS DOWAGER DONG:
MOTHER TO THE FORMER EMPEROR LING AND GRANDMOTHER TO EMPEROR XIAN. IN VOLUME 3, EMPRESS HE ORDERS FOR HER DEATH TO SECURE HER SON LIU BIAN'S THRONE AS THE NEXT EMPEROR OF HAN.

GAO SHUN:
ONE OF LU BU'S TRUSTED GENERALS. HE IS EXECUTED ALONG WITH HIS LORD IN VOLUME 14.

GUO SI:
A GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED DONG ZHUO. AFTER DONG ZHUO'S DEATH, HE AND LI JUE TOOK CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND DID AS THEY PLEASED UNTIL THE EMPEROR RUNS TO CAO CAO FOR PROTECTION.

HE JIN:
OLDER BROTHER OF EMPRESS HE. ORIGINALLY A SIMPLE BUTCHER, HE BECAME A GENERAL WHEN HIS YOUNGER SISTER BECAME EMPEROR LING'S CONSORT. IN VOLUME 3, HE ATTEMPTS TO ELIMINATE THE TEN ATTENDANTS, ONLY TO BE DISSUADED FROM DOING SO BY HIS YOUNGER SISTER. HE IS LATER KILLED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS.

HOU CHENG:
ONE OF LU BU'S GENERALS. IN VOLUME 14, HE, ALONG WITH GENERALS WEI XU AND SONG XIAN, BETRAYS LU BU AND DEFECTS TO CAO CAO'S SIDE.

HUA XIONG:
FAMED GENERAL SERVING UNDER DONG ZHUO. IN VOLUME 5, HE DEFEATS SUN JIAN'S ARMY BUT IS LATER KILLED BY GUAN YU.

JI PING:
IMPERIAL PHYSICIAN OF HAN WHO, WITH DONG CHENG, PLOTS TO POISON CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 17, CAO CAO DISCOVERS THEIR PLOT AND EXECUTES HIM.

JIANG QIN:
FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH ZHOU TAI, BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR SUN CE'S FATHER, SUN JIAN.

LADY FUYOU:
FICTIONAL CHARACTER CREATED BY MITSUTERU YOKOYAMA AND LIU BEI'S FIRST LOVE. ZHANG FEI FORMERLY SERVED HER FAMILY, WHO WERE MASSCRED BY THE YELLOW TURBAN REBELS.

LADY MI:
LIU BEI'S FIRST WIFE.

LI JUE:
A GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED DONG ZHUO. AFTER DONG ZHUO'S DEATH, HE AND GUO SI TOOK CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND DID AS THEY PLEASED UNTIL THE EMPEROR RUNS TO CAO CAO FOR PROTECTION.

LI DIAN:
SCHOLARLY GENERAL UNDER THE SERVICE OF CAO CAO.

LIU BIAN:
THE SON OF EMPRESS HE AND BRIEFLY THE EMPEROR OF HAN AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER, EMPEROR LING. IN VOLUME 4, HE WAS DEPOSED BY DONG ZHUO AND LATER KILLED ALONG WITH HIS MOTHER BY LI RU.

LIU FENG:
LIU BEI'S ADOPTED SON. ORIGINALLY THE NEPHEW OF LIU MI, HE WAS ADOPTED BY LIU BEI WHO TOOK A LIKING TO HIM IN VOLUME 21.

LIU QI:
ELDEST SON OF LIU BIAO AND THE OLDER BROTHER OF LIU CONG.

LU ZHI:
LIU BEI'S FORMER TEACHER AND THE PALACE COMMANDER WHO WAS PLACED IN CHARGE OF LEADING THE HAN ARMY AGAINST THE YELLOW TURBANS. HE WAS LATER DEMOTED FOR FAILING TO BRIBE ONE OF THE IMPERIAL MESSENGERS.

ZHANG BAO:
ZHANG JIAO'S YOUNGER BROTHER AND THE YELLOW TURBAN'S GENERAL OF THE LAND. HE WAS KILLED BY LIU BEI IN VOLUME 2.

ZHANG JIAO:
LEADER OF THE YELLOW TURBAN REBELLION.
HE PASSED AWAY DUE TO ILLNESS IN VOLUME 3.

ZHANG ZHAO/ZHANG HONG:
THE TWO GENIUSES OF JIANGDONG, ALSO KNOWN AS THE "TWO ZHANGS." AFTER SUN CE'S ADMANT INSISTENCE, THEY DECIDE TO SERVE HIM AND HELP HIS CAMPAIGN TO CONQUER JIANGNAN AND JIANGDONG.

ZHOU TAI:
FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH JIANG QIN BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS FATHER, SUN JIAN.

SANGOKUSHI
(ROMANCE OF THE
THREE KINGDOMS)

三国志

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（月刊『コミックトム』掲載）

CAO CAO'S INVASION

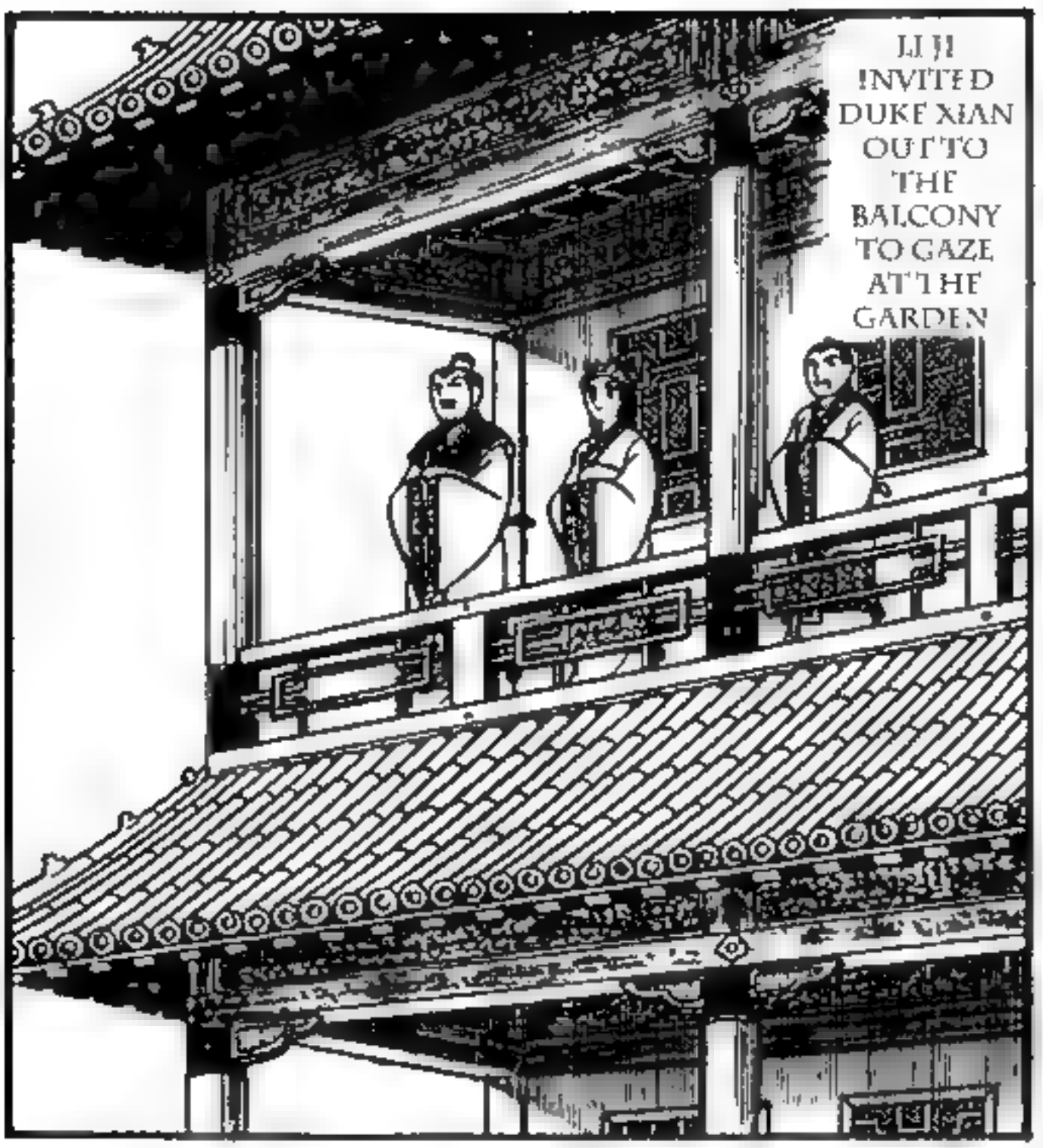
LONG, LONG AGO DURING THE SPRING AND AUTUMN PERIOD, DUKE XIAN OF JIN HAD TWO SONS BORN BY HIS FIRST WIFE. THE OLDER WAS SHENSHENG WHILE THE YOUNGER WAS CHONG ER

BUT DUKE XIAN ALSO HAD ANOTHER SON BORN BY LI JI, HIS SECOND WIFE.

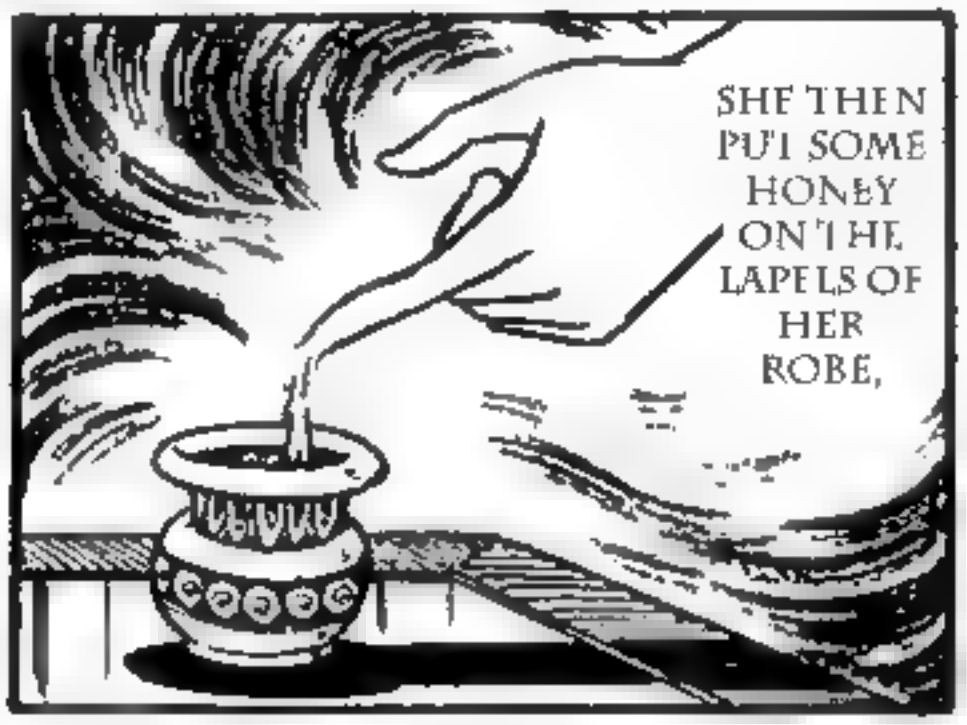
WANTING TO MAKE HER OWN SON THE NEXT HEIR OF JIN, LI JI OFTEN POINTED OUT CHONG'ER AND SHENSHENG'S FLAWS TO DUKE XIAN

HOWEVER, HE REFUSED TO HEAR HER OUT FOR HE KNEW HOW TALENTED HIS TWO SONS WERE

THUS, LI JI DEVISED A CUNNING PLAN.


LI JI
INVITED
DUKE XIAN
OUT TO
THE
BALCONY
TO GAZE
AT THE
GARDEN

ON ONE
NICE
SPRING
DAY,


SHE THEN
PUT SOME
HONEY
ON THE
LAPELS OF
HER
ROBE,

AND INVITED
SHENSHENG
OUT TO THE
GARDEN

PANICKING, SHENSHENG TRIED TO DRIVE AWAY THE BEES BY BRUSHING LI JI'S ROBES.

SOON ENOUGH, BEES, ATTRACTED BY THE HONEY, BEGAN TO SWARM AROUND LI JI

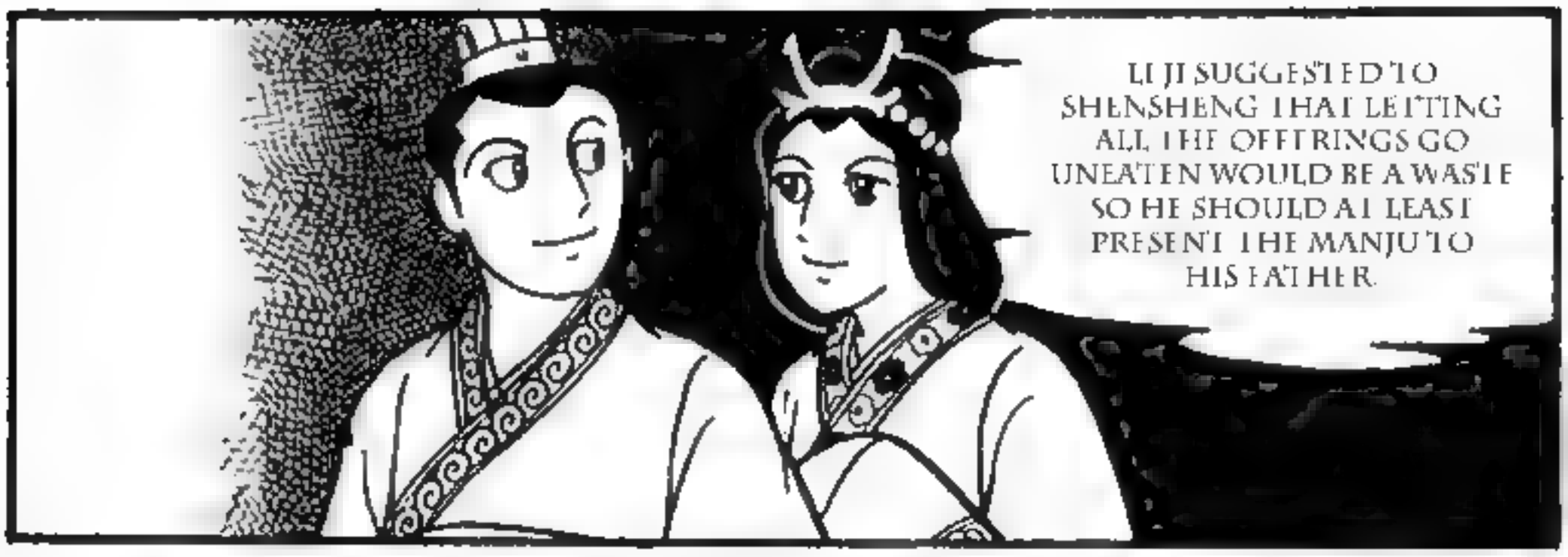
FOR HE MISTAKENLY THOUGHT SHENSHENG WAS FLIRTING WITH LI JI

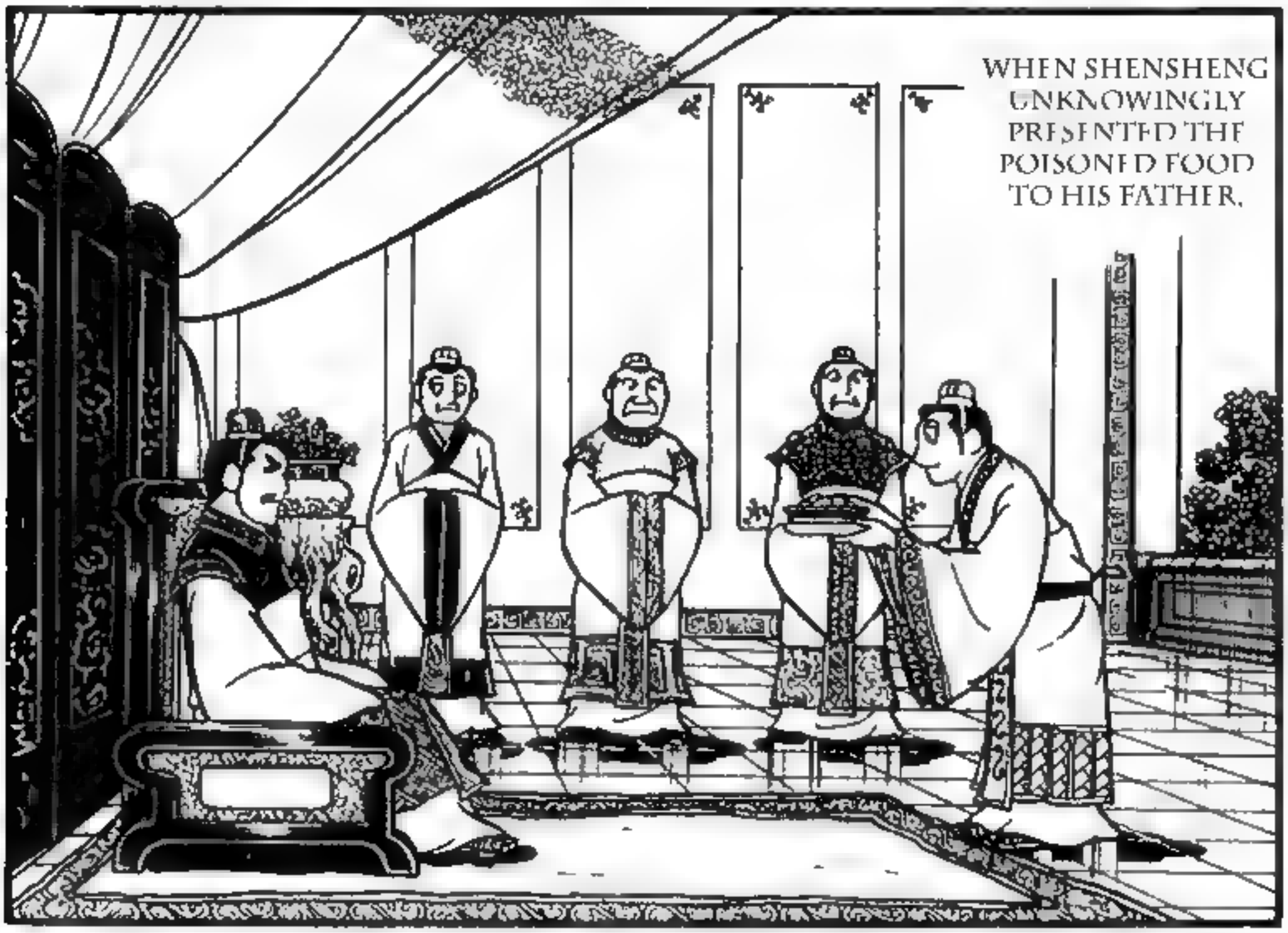
DUKE XIAN WAS GREATLY ANGERED BY THIS SIGHT.

SEEING THAT HER PLAN WAS A SUCCESS, LI JI CAME UP WITH ANOTHER.

FROM THEN ON, DUKE XIAN NO LONGER TRUSTED SHENSHENG

SHE SECRETLY POISONED THE MANJU OFFERING PRESENTED TO THE LATE FIRST WIFE OF DUKE XIAN

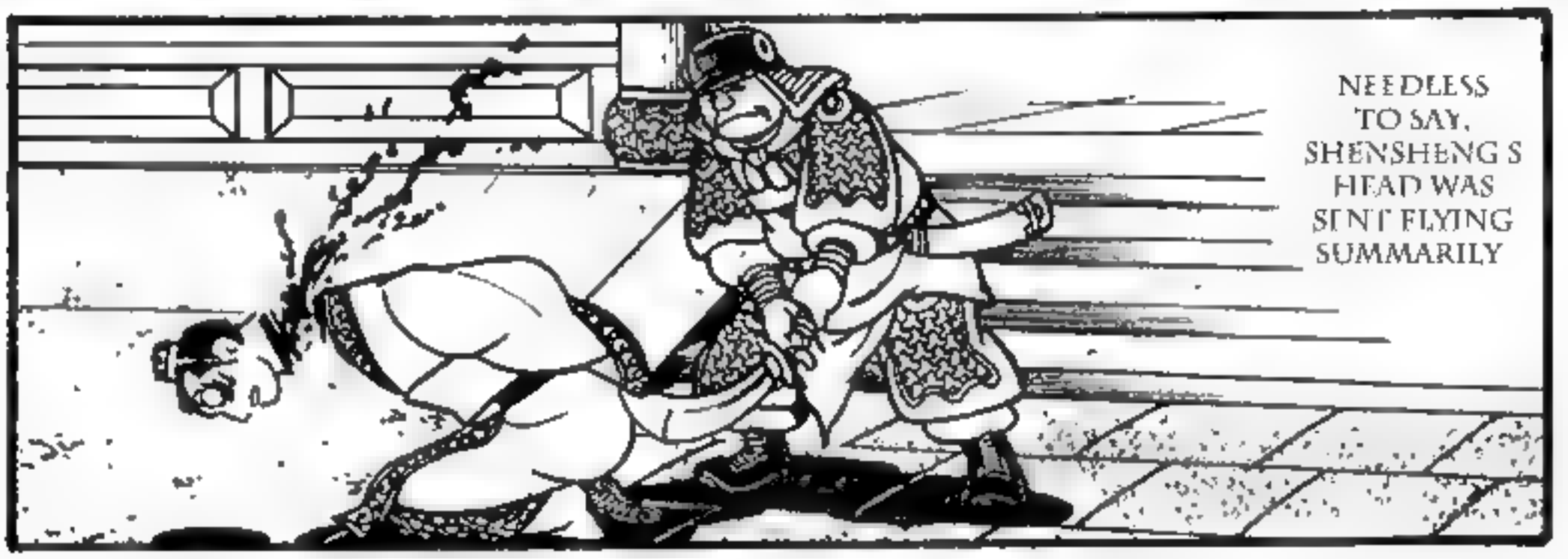

LI JI SUGGESTED TO SHENSHENG THAT LETTING ALL THE OFFERINGS GO UNEATEN WOULD BE A WASTE SO HE SHOULD AT LEAST PRESENT THE MANJU TO HIS FATHER.


WHEN SHENSHENG UNKNOWINGLY PRESENTED THE POISONED FOOD TO HIS FATHER.

LI JI SUDDENLY STEPPED IN SAYING THAT THE FOOD SHOULD BE CHECKED FOR POISON SINCE IT CAME FROM OUTSIDE THE PALACE

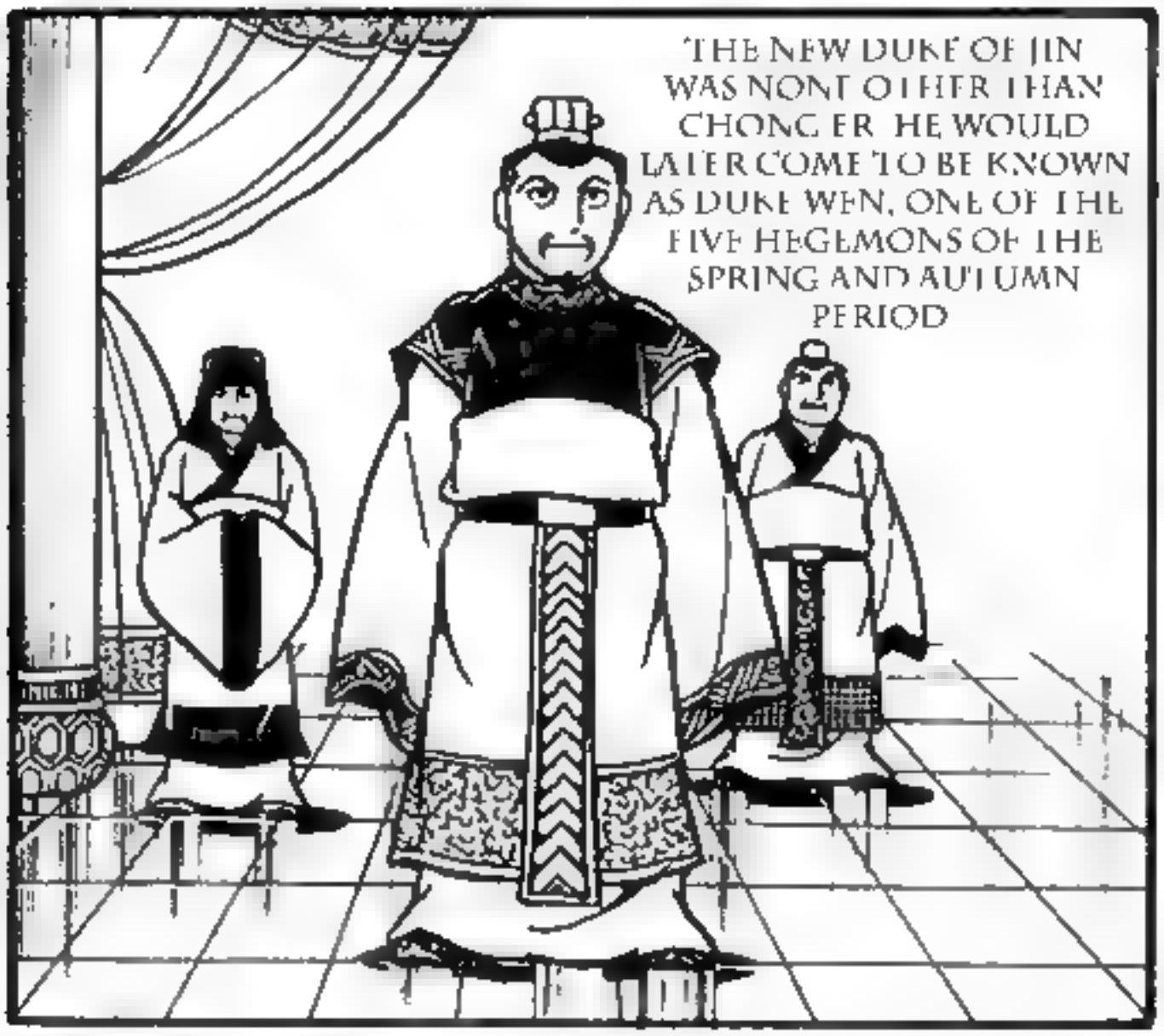
SO SHE THREW ONE OF THE MANJU TO A PALACE DOG

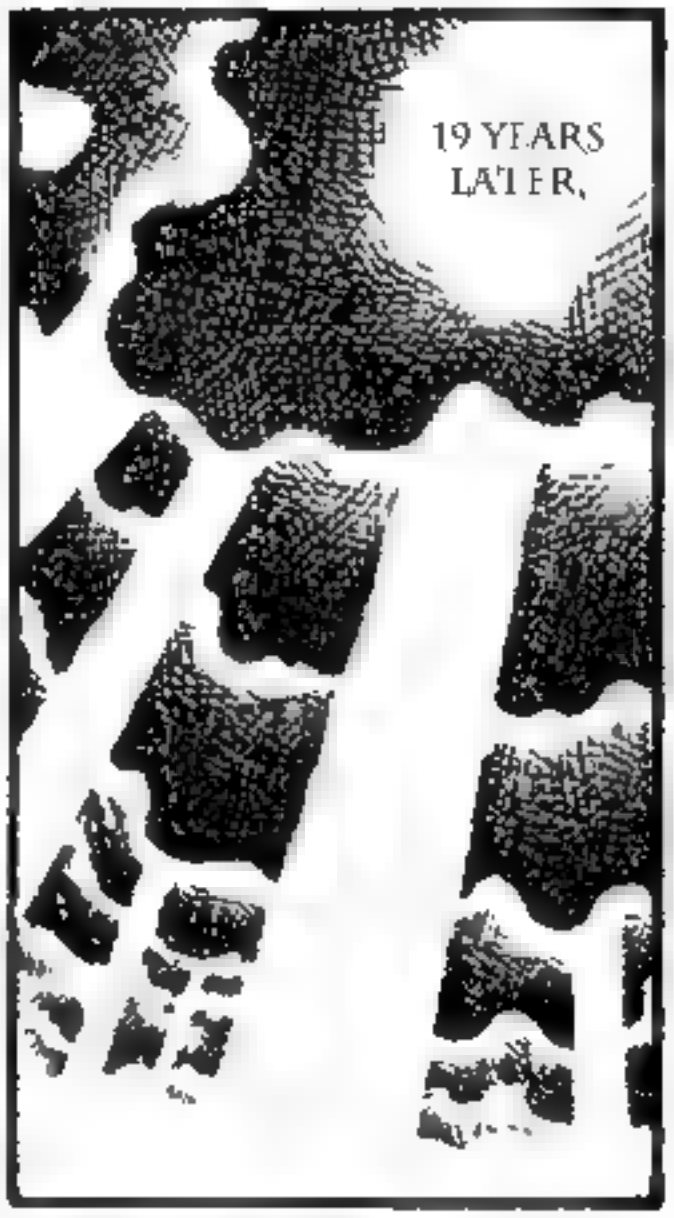
THE DOG INSTANTLY COUGHED UP BLOOD AND DIED


NEEDLESS TO SAY, SHENSHENG S HEAD WAS SENT FLYING SUMMARILY

SO HE QUICKLY FLED FROM JIN

SEEING THIS CHONG ER REALIZED HE WOULD BE NEXT


THE NEW DUKE OF JIN WAS NONE OTHER THAN CHONG ER. HE WOULD LATER COME TO BE KNOWN AS DUKE WEN, ONE OF THE FIVE HEGEMONS OF THE SPRING AND AUTUMN PERIOD


19 YEARS LATER,

Y-YES, SIR. I SHALL DO AS THE FAMOUS DUKE WEN OF JIN DID.

DO YOU UNDER-STAND?

I SHALL DO EXACTLY THAT, SIR.

DO SO, AND YOU MAY BE AS FORTUNATE AS DUKE WEN OF JIN.

TO THE SOUTHEAST OF JINGZHOU LIES JIANGXIA, WHICH IS WEAKLY DEFENDED AFTER THE RECENT DEATH OF GENERAL HUANG ZU. IF YOU WISH TO ESCAPE THE WRATH OF YOUR STEP MOTHER, I SUGGEST YOU ASK YOUR FATHER TO PLACE YOU IN CHARGE OF GUARDING JIANGXIA.

BRING THE LADDER!

NOW WOULD YOU MIND LETTING ME DOWN FROM HERE?

OF COURSE, SIR.

I SHALL NEVER FORGET THE DEBT I OWE TO YOU, SIR.
EXCUSE ME, THEN.

YES, SIR.
LIU BIAO URGENTLY WISHES TO SPEAK WITH ME?
YES, PERHAPS.
I ASSUME IT'S ABOUT LIU QI.

YES.

LIU QI WISHES TO BE PLACED IN CHARGE OF DEFENDING JIANGXIA?

I, FOR ONE, THINK IT'S A GREAT IDEA, SIR.

HE ASKED ME ALL OF A SUDDEN SO I'M NOT QUITE SURE WHAT TO MAKE OF IT.

IS THAT SO?

JIANGXIA IS A CRUCIAL TERRITORY FOR IT LIES ON WU'S BORDERS SO IT IS IMPERATIVE TO KEEP IT WELL-GUARDED. NOT ONLY THAT, SENDING SIR'S OWN SON WILL SURELY HELP RAISE THE MORALE OF JIANGXIA'S TROOPS.

I HEAR THAT CAO CAO'S BUILDING UP QUITE A LARGE NAVAL FORCE THESE DAYS. IT'S A CLEAR SIGN THAT HE INTENDS TO CONQUER THESE SOUTHERN LANDS IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

BORDER DEFENSE IS INDEED CRUCIA...

SO PLEASE LEAVE JINGZHOU'S SOUTH-EASTERN BORDER TO LIU QI WHILE I CONTINUE TO DEFEND THE NORTH-WESTERN BORDER IN THE MEANWHILE.

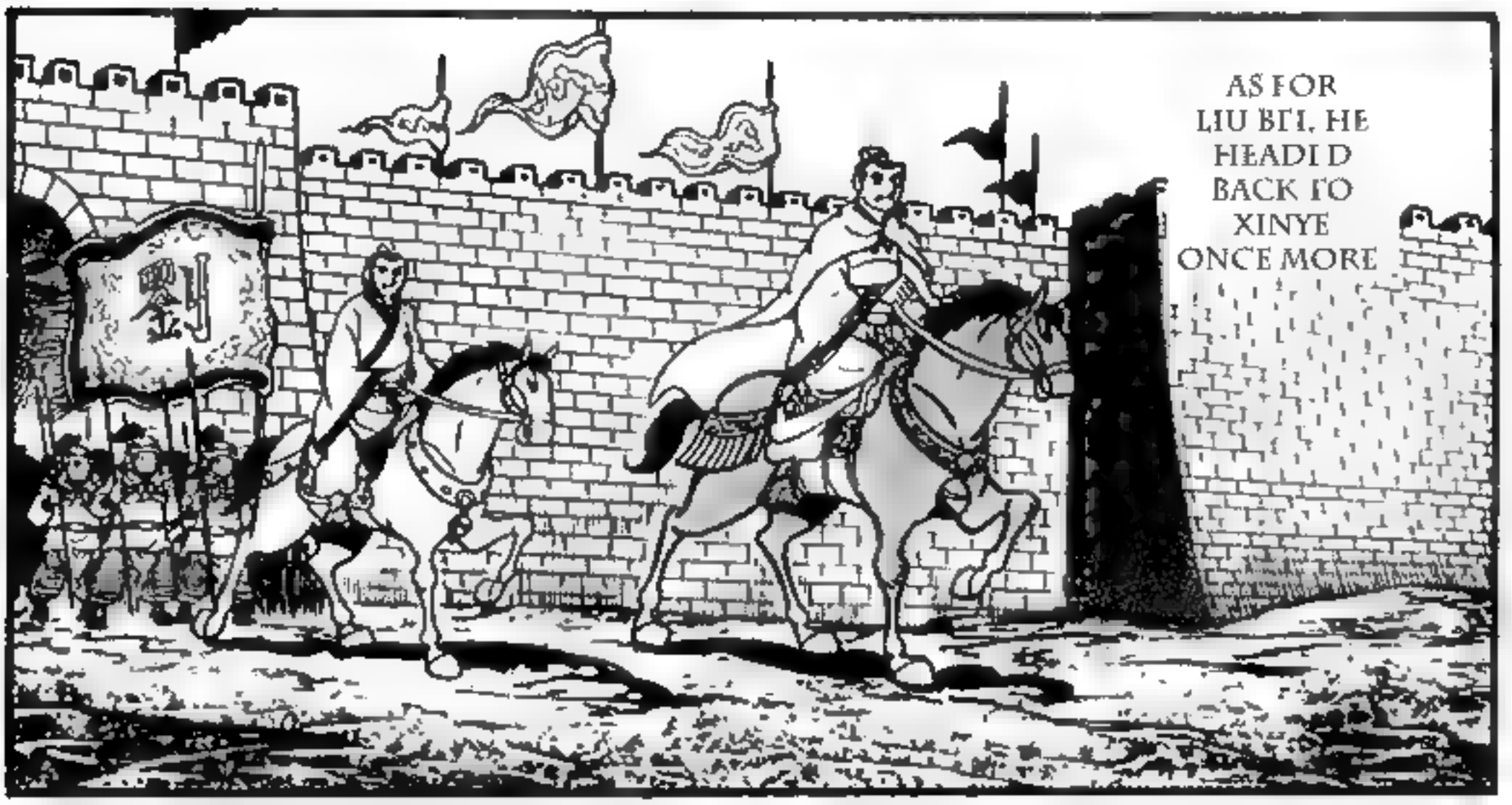
EXCELLENT CHOICE, SIR.

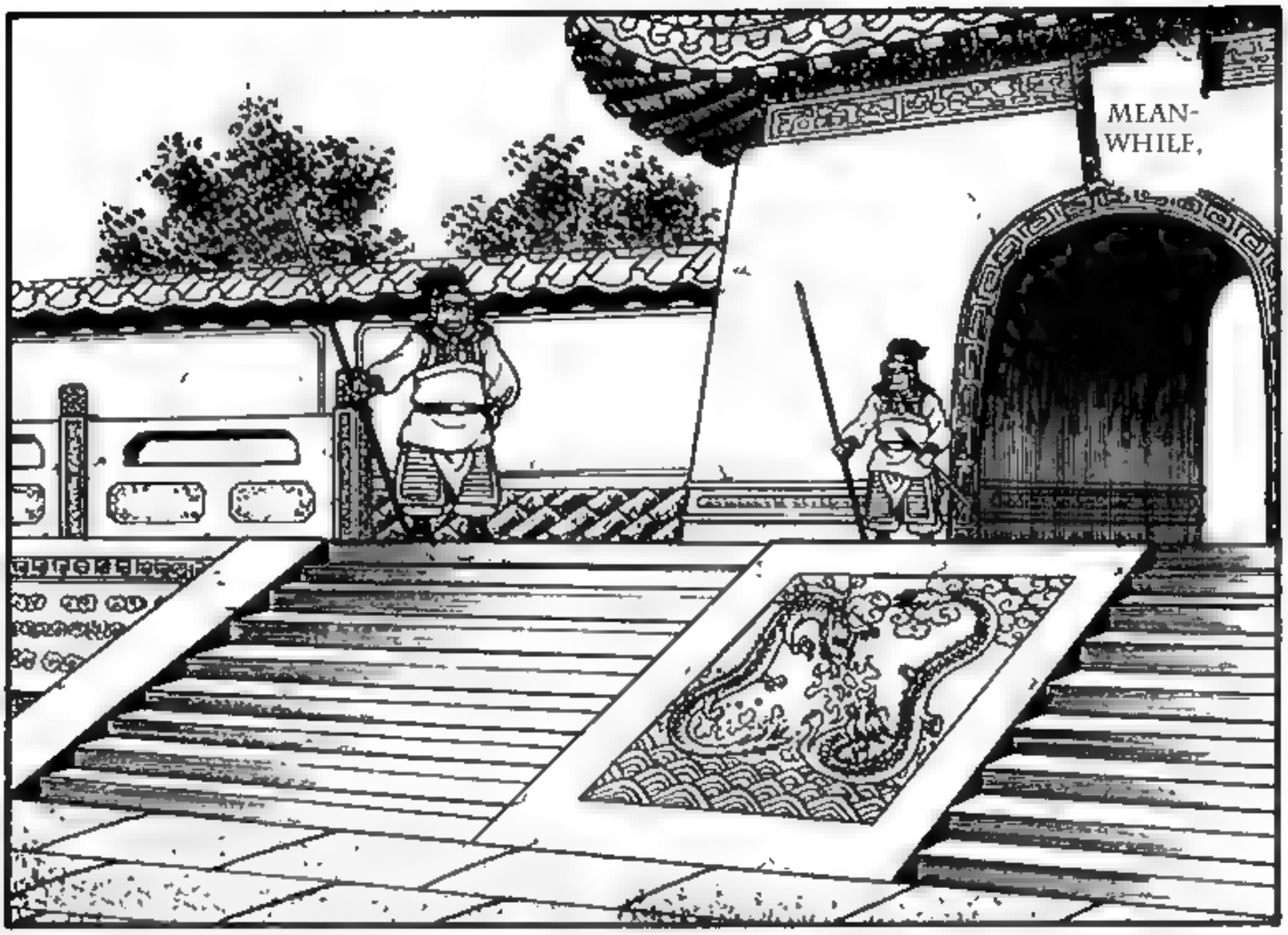
ALRIGHT, I SHALL LISTEN TO YOUR ADVICE AND LET LIU QI GO.

I SHALL DO ALL THAT MY UNTALENTED SELF CAN.

I HOPE YOU'LL CONTINUE TO AID ME IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES, LIU BEI

THUS, LIU QI HEADED TO JIANGXIA IN ORDER TO FLEE FROM HIS STEP MOTHER.


AS FOR LIU BEI, HE HEADED BACK TO XINYE ONCE MORE


MEAN-
WHILE,

CAO CAO HAD BEEN BUSY PLANNING HIS CONQUEST OF SOUTHERN CHINA.

YES, CHANCELLOR. HE HAS APPARENTLY RECRUITED SEVERAL THOUSAND VOLUNTEERS ALREADY.

I HEAR THAT SOME FELLOW NAMED KONGMING IS TRAINING THE PEASANTS FOR MILITARY DUTY?

YES...

ALLOWING LIU BEI THE TIME TO BUILD UP HIS FORCES WILL ONLY MEAN TROUBLE FOR US. I SUGGEST WE CRUSH HIM SOON AS POSSIBLE.

I WOULD ADVISE AGAINST THAT, CHANCELLOR.

ALRIGHT, LET US MAKE XINYE AS A STEPPING STONE IN CONQUERING THE SOUTHERN LANDS.

WHAT NONSENSE IS THIS!? THEIR FORCES BARELY NUMBER A FEW THOUSAND!

FROM WHAT I HEAR, KONGMING IS SAID TO BE A MOST CAPABLE STRATEGIST. WE MUST NOT SO HASTILY DECIDE TO ATTACK LIU BEI.

I AGREE AS WELL.

EXACTLY. THERE IS NO REAL BENEFIT FROM CRUSHING SUCH SMALL NUMBERS. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF WE WERE TO LOSE, SIR'S AUTHORITY WILL SEVERELY BE COMPROMISED.

AH, XU SHU.

HE IS TRULY A TERRIFY-ING MAN.

YOU'RE WELL ACQUAINTED WITH XINYE AND ITS PEOPLE, AREN'T YOU? CAN YOU TELL ME ANYTHING ABOUT THIS KONGMING FELLOW?

A MASTER OF ASTROLOGY, GEOGRAPHY, AND HUMAN NATURE, HE IS WELL-VERSED IN ALL THE SIX SECRET TEACHINGS AND OTHER MILITARY TREATISES.

I AM A LOWLY FIREFLY, WHILE KONGMING IS A BRIGHT FULL MOON.

SUCH A COMPARISON SHOULD NOT EVEN BE MADE IN THE FIRST PLACE.

YOU YOURSELF POSSESS ENOUGH TALENT TO TOY AROUND WITH MY GENERAL, CAO REN. HOW DOES THIS KONGMING COMPARE TO YOU?

WHAT DO YOU HESITATE FOR, CHANCELLOR!?

I SEE...

SMART AS HE MAY BE, KONGMING IS STILL BUT A MERE HUMAN! NOT ONLY THAT, HE IS A YOUNGSTER IN HIS TWENTIES WITHOUT ANY ACTUAL BATTLE EXPERIENCE! IN MY EYES, HE IS NOTHING BUT AN INSIGNIFICANT INFANT!

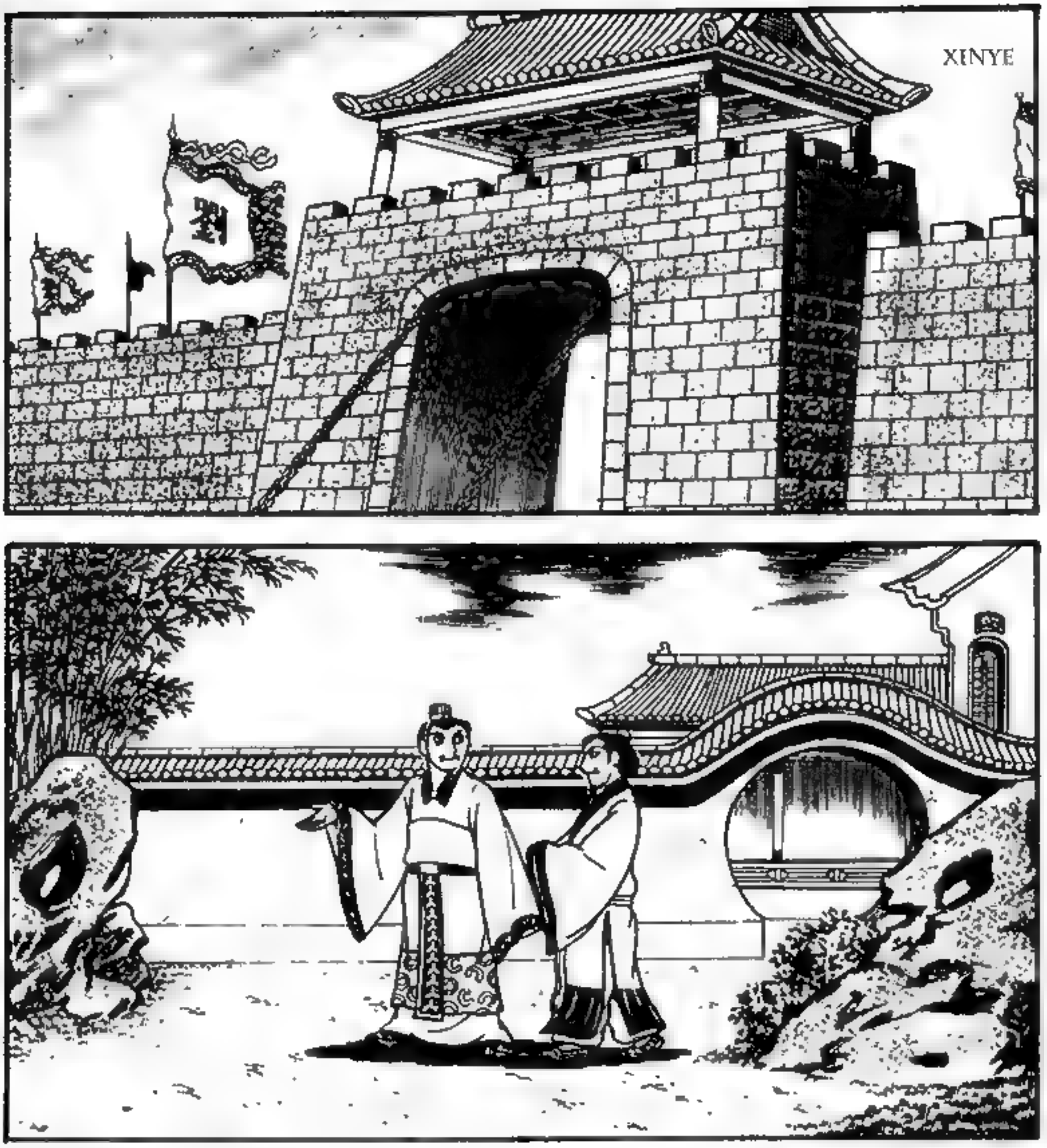
FINE, I SHALL TRUST YOUR CONFIDENCE, XIAHOU DUN.

HMM...

I HEREBY GIVE YOU THE ORDER TO DESTROY XINYE.

YES, SIR.

WITH XIAHOU DUN
APPOINTED AS THE
COMMANDER,
CAO CAO'S ARMY OF
100,000 MARCHED
ONWARDS TO XINYE


XINYE

BROTHER, DON'T YOU THINK OUR LORD'S FAWNING OVER KONGMING IS A LITTLE EXCESSIVE?

THEY ALMOST SEEM LIKE TWO INTIMATE LOVERS.
THERE THEY GO AGAIN.

ALL THE MEN HERE HAVE REMAINED BY OUR LORD'S SIDE FOR YEARS, BRAVING DEATH.

YES, IT IS A TAD EXCESSIVE, I ADMIT.

IT WOULDN'T BE SURPRISING IF THE OTHER MEN BEGIN TO COMPLAIN...

YET FROM THE MOMENT OUR LORD WAKES UP, ALL HE SAYS IS KONGMING THIS AND KONGMING THAT. WHETHER IT BE DRINKING, EATING, OR SOMETHING ELSE, HE SAYS HE CANNOT DO IT UNLESS KONGMING IS WITH HIM. IT'S AS IF OUR LORD HAS FORGOTTEN ABOUT ALL HIS OTHER LOYAL SUBJECTS.

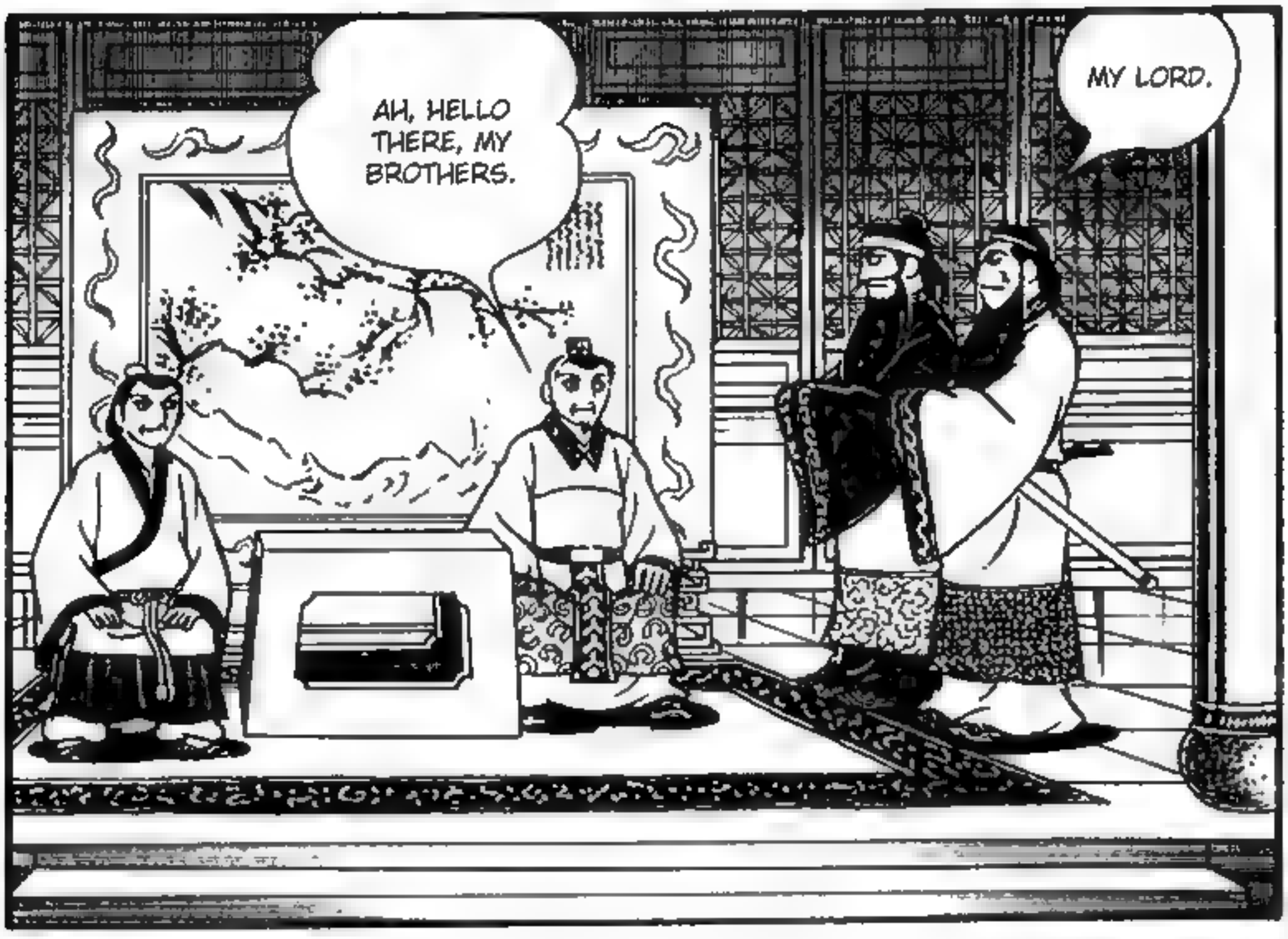
YES, GOOD POINT.

AT THIS RATE, OUR LORD WILL LOSE THE HEART OF HIS OTHER FOLLOWERS.

YES, LET'S.

WHAT SAY YOU AND I RAISE OUR CONCERNS TO OUR LORD?

EVER SINCE THAT KONGMING CAME, THINGS HAVEN'T BEEN GOING WELL AT ALL.


AH, HELLO THERE, MY BROTHERS.
MY LORD.

AND WHAT WOULD THAT BE?

WE WISH TO SPEAK TO YOU ABOUT SOMETHING.

I SHALL EXCUSE MYSELF FOR THE TIME BEING.

?

WELL...

WHAT'S GOING ON? YOU TWO AREN'T ACTING LIKE YOUR USUAL SELVES.

YOU MEAN KONGMING?

WE FEAR THAT YOU'RE EXCESSIVELY DOTING ON ONE MAN.

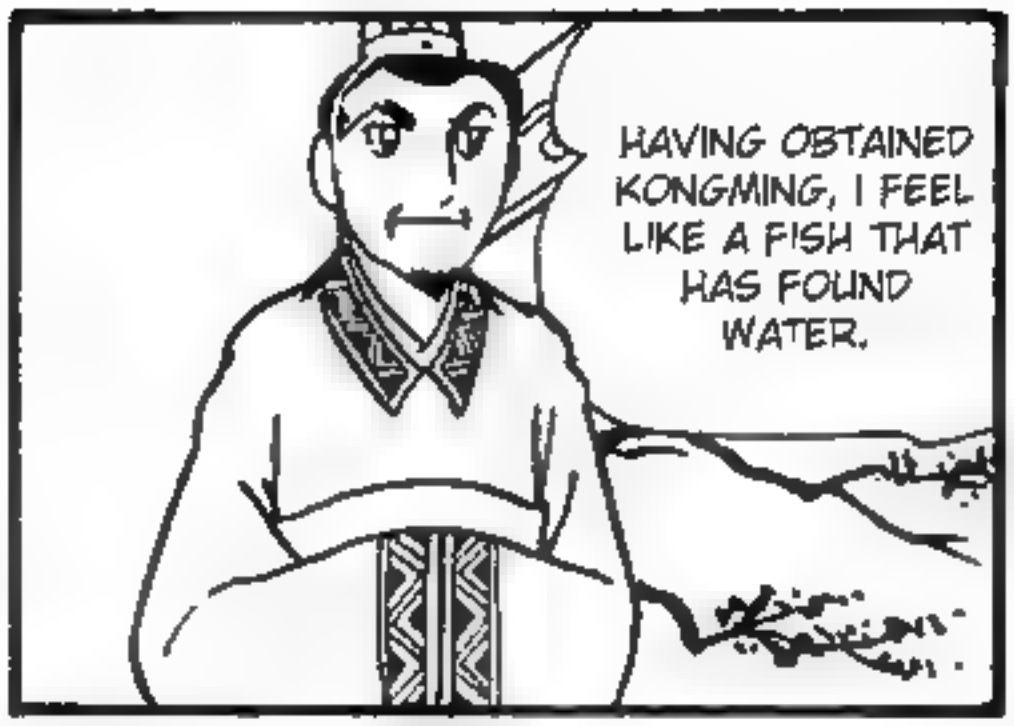
THAT DAY WILL SOON COME.

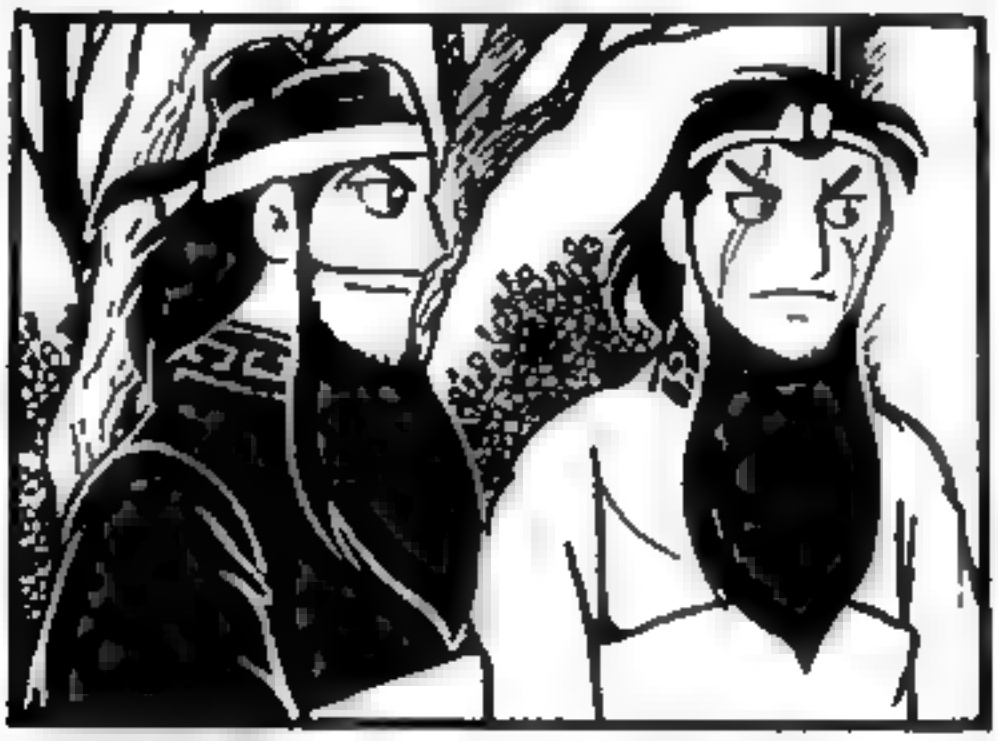
NOT TO BE RUDE OR ANYTHING, BUT DOES THIS KONGMING FELLOW EVEN POSSESS ANY ACTUAL TALENT? I MEAN, TECHNICALLY, WE'VE NEVER SEEN HIM ACHIEVE ANYTHING YET.

BUT...

TO ESTABLISH A STRONG EMPIRE, ONE NEEDS BOTH COURAGE AND WISDOM. YOU TWO ARE MY COURAGE WHILE KONGMING IS MY WISDOM. NEITHER IS DISPENSIBLE.

Y-YOU MEAN TO SAY KONGMING IS THE WATER WHILE MY LORD IS JUST A LOWLY FISH!?


HAVING OBTAINED KONGMING, I FEEL LIKE A FISH THAT HAS FOUND WATER.



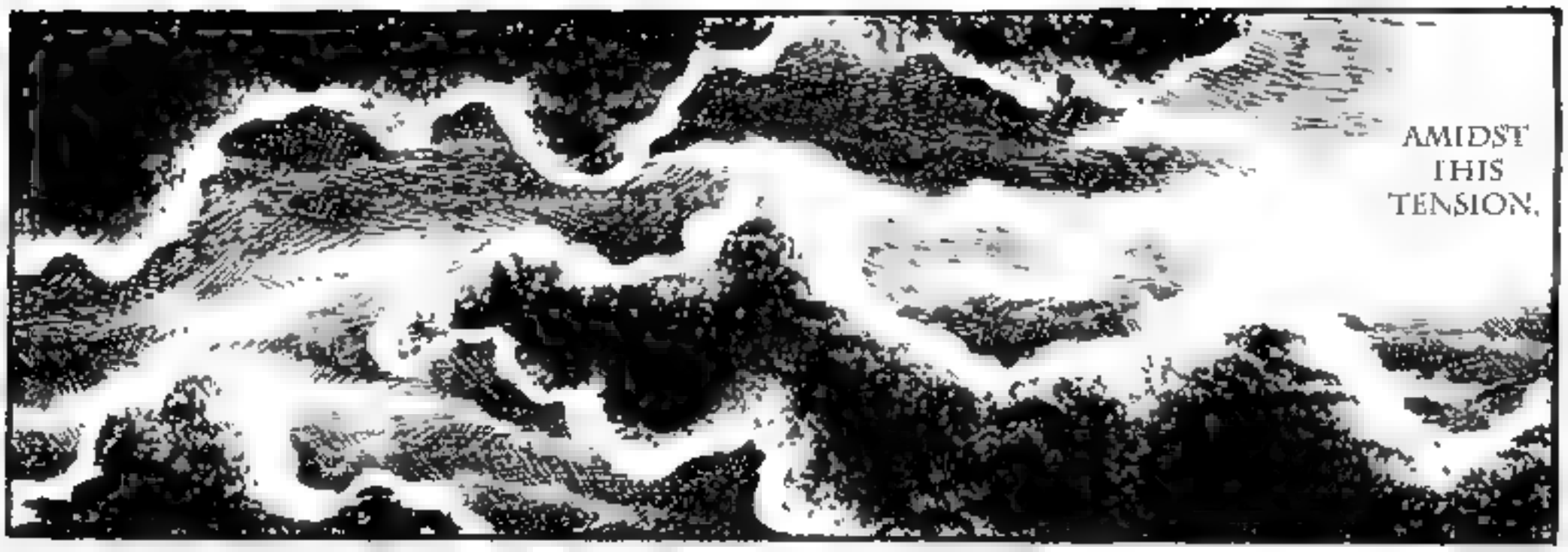
EXACTLY. SO I ASK YOU NOT TO DISRESPECT KONGMING.

BUT WE CAN'T JUST LET THIS SITUATION CONTINUE ON FOREVER.
THIS IS FAR WORSE THAN I THOUGHT. HE WON'T LISTEN TO ANYTHING WE HAVE TO SAY IF HE'S THAT OBSESSED.

IF THAT'S HOW STRONGLY MY LORD FEELS, WE SHALL OBLIGE.

HEY, LOOK THERE GOES THE "WATER."

JUST YOU WAIT. I'LL REVEAL HIM FOR WHAT HE REALLY IS AND BRING OUR LORD BACK TO HIS SENSES ONE DAY...


AMIDST
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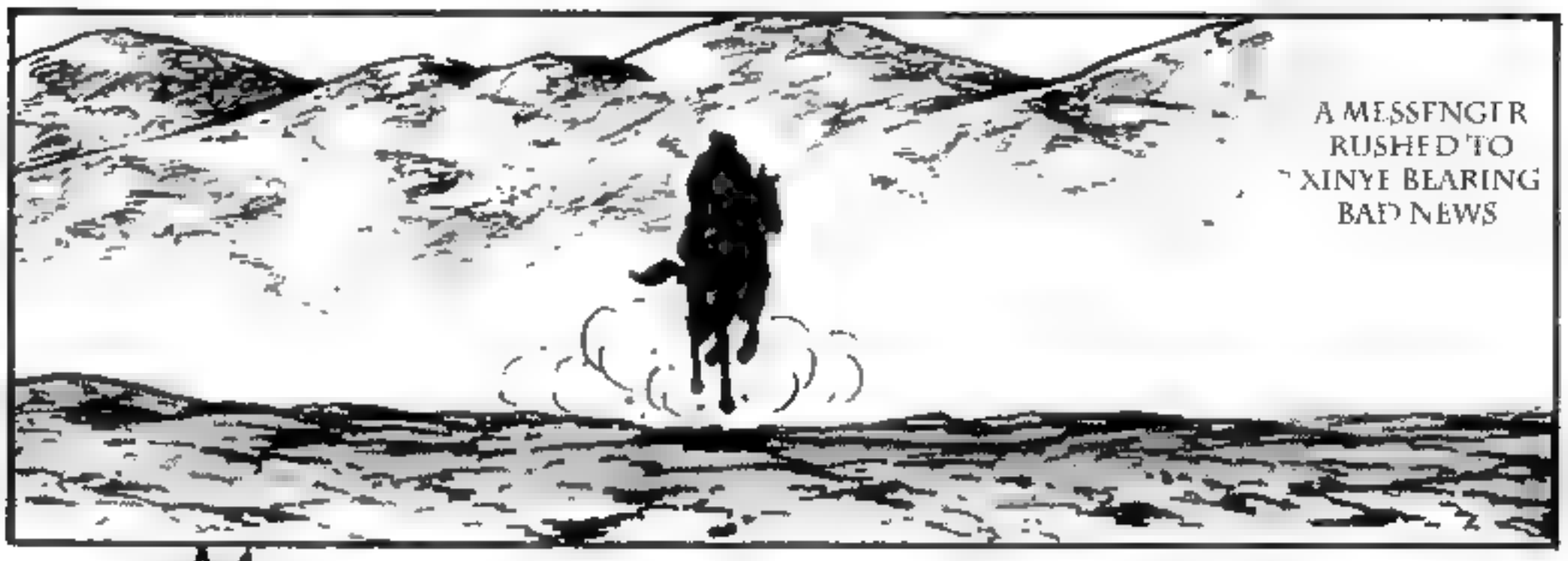
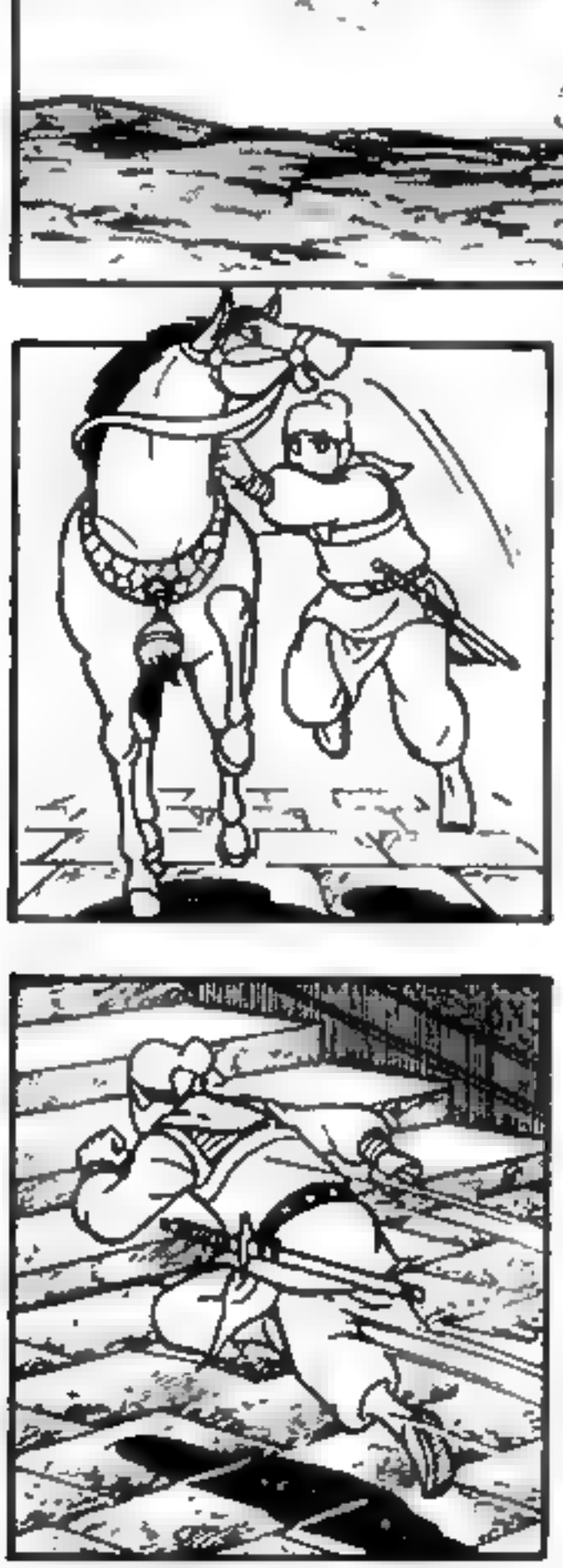

A MESSENGER
RUSHED TO
XINYE BEARING
BAD NEWS



EMERGENCY
REPORT!

WHAT!?

MY LORD! CAO CAO'S ARMY OF 100,000 SOLDIERS IS HEADING HERE AS I SPEAK!

ISN'T THIS QUITE THE CATASTROPHE? IT'S ALMOST LIKE A WILDFIRE. IN THAT CASE, MIGHT I SUGGEST WE USE THE "WATER" TO PUT IT OUT?

HOW COULD WE POSSIBLY DEFEND OUR SMALL CASTLE AGAINST AN ARMY OF 100,000!?

ARE YOU STILL HARBOURING SUCH PETTY JEALOUSIES IN THIS CRISIS!?

YES, SIR.

AND GO CALL KONGMING.

PREPARE THE TROOPS FOR BATTLE IMMEDIATELY!

OUR LORD URGENTLY REQUESTS SIR'S PRESENCE.

WE HAVE AN EMERGENCY ON OUR HANDS.

YOU CALLED, MY LORD?

WELL THAT'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, MY LORD.

OH?

CAO CAO HAS SENT AN ARMY OF 100,000 TO CRUSH XINYE!

I FEAR THAT GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI WILL REFUSE TO FOLLOW MY ORDERS. IF THAT HAPPENS, ALL THE STRATEGIES IN THE WORLD WILL ULTI-MATELY BE FUTILE.

OUR REAL PROBLEM LIES WITHIN.

I'M AFRAID THOSE TWO STILL HARBOR PETTY JEALOUSIES AGAINST YOU...

WE MUST FIRST COME UP WITH A WAY TO MAKE THOSE TWO OBEY.

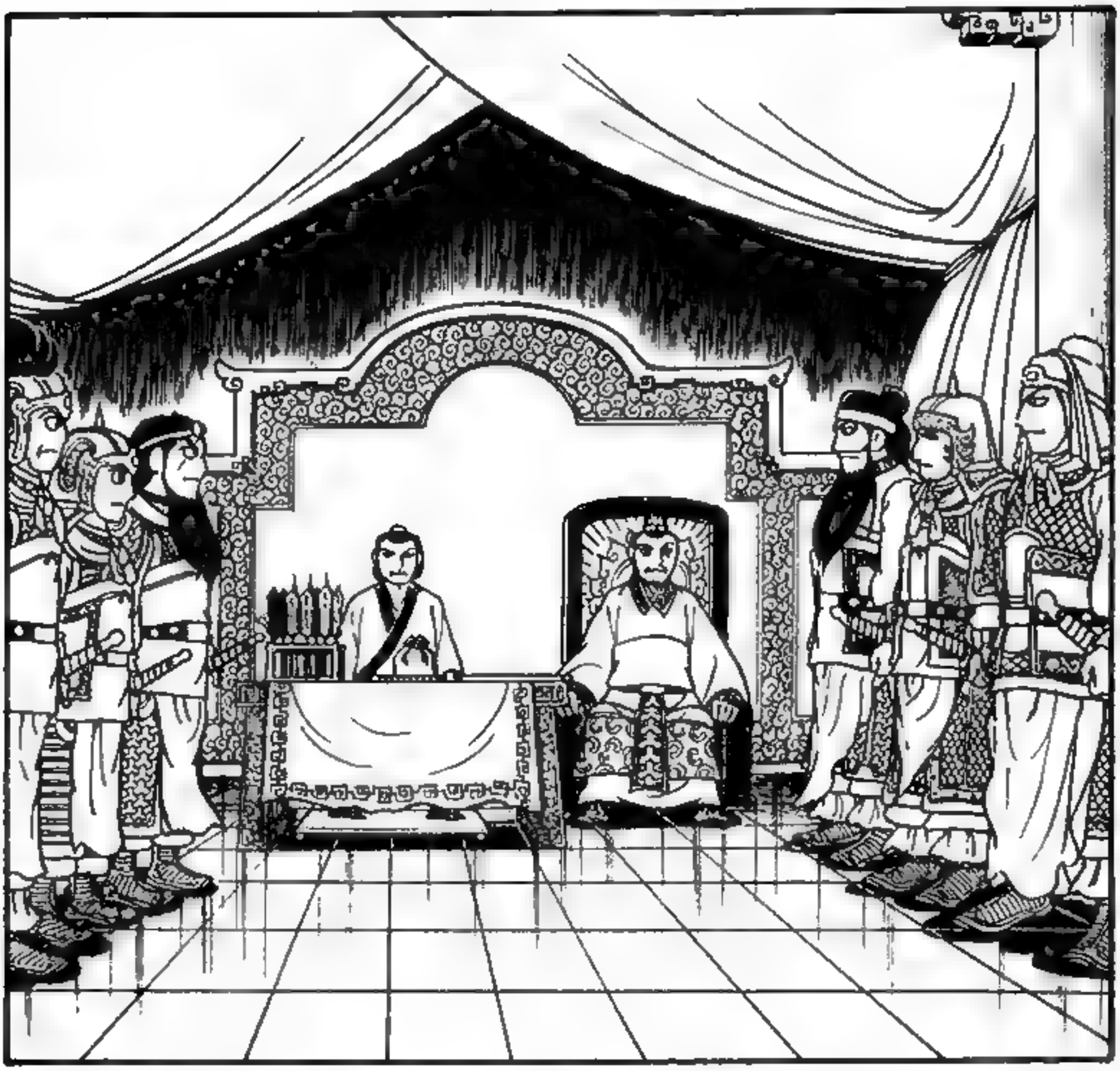
YES BUT WHY?

COULD YOU PLEASE LEND ME YOUR SEAL OF OFFICE AND SWORD?

NOW PLEASE ASSEMBLE ALL THE GENERALS.

THESE WILL ACT AS EMBLEMS OF YOUR DIRECT AUTHORITY. THUS, DISOBEYING MY ORDERS WILL EQUAL TREASON AGAINST MY LORD.

BATTLE OF BOWANG SLOPE



WHETHER WE ACHIEVE VICTORY OR BE ANNHILATED RESTS IN ALL OUR HANDS.
I ASSUME YOU GENTLEMEN HAVE ALREADY HEARD THAT CAO CAO'S 100,000-STRONG ARMY IS HEADED THIS WAY.

WE SHALL STAGE THE BATTLE AT THE STEEP SLOPES OF BOWANG.

REST ASSURED, I HAVE COME UP WITH A SOUND PLAN USING THE TERRAIN TO OUR ADVANTAGE.

TO THE LEFT OF BOWANG IS YUSHAN HILLS, WHILE TO THE RIGHT LIES ANLIN FOREST.

GENERAL GUAN YU, YOU WILL TAKE 1,500 MEN AND HIDE IN YUSHAN HILLS. AFTER LETTING THE ENEMY ARMY PASS, YOU ARE TO AMBUSH THE ENEMY'S REAR AND SET FIRE TO THEIR SUPPLIES.

GENERAL ZHANG FEI, YOU WILL TAKE 1,500 MEN AND HIDE IN ANLIN FOREST. WHEN YOU SEE THAT GUAN YU HAS SUCCESSFULLY SET FIRE TO THE ENEMY'S REAR, YOU SHALL AMBUSH THE MIDDLE OF THEIR ARMY.

AS FOR GUAN PING AND LIU FENG, THE EACH OF YOU SHALL TAKE 500 MEN AND WAIT AT BOWANG. WHEN THE ENEMY NEARS, SET FIRE TO SPLIT UP THE ENEMY VANGUARD FROM THE REST OF THEIR ARMY.

GENERAL ZHAO ZILONG, YOU SHALL HEAD OUT TO MEET THEM FROM THE FRONT.

I GET TO LEAD THE VANGUARD? FINE BY ME.

YES, BUT YOUR OBJECTIVE IS TO FEIGN DEFEAT AND LURE THE ENEMY DEEP INTO BOWANG.

UNDER-STOOD.

NOW THAT I UNDERSTAND WHERE WE GENERALS OUGHT TO BE, MIGHT I ASK WHERE YOU WILL BE DURING ALL OF THIS?

OUR LORD SHALL COMMAND THE RESERVES AND ASSIST ZHAO ZILONG ONCE THE ENEMY HAS BEEN LURED.

OH, SO YOU'LL STAY HERE, FAR AWAY FROM THE BATTLEFIELD?

I SHALL STAY HERE IN XINYE AND GUARD THE CASTLE.

I DID NOT ASK WHERE OUR LORD WOULD BE, I ASKED WHERE *YOU* WOULD BE FIGHTING.

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

DID YOU HEAR THAT, MY COMRADES!?

THIS SO-CALLED GENIUS NOT ONLY ORDERS US TO THE BATTLEFIELD BUT OUR LORD AS WELL, ALL THE WHILE RESTING HERE COMFORTABLY!

IS THIS MAN A GENIUS OR MERELY A COWARD!?

SILENCE!

WELL I SAY BOTH! HE IS A COWARD WHO'S INGENIOUS AT KEEPING ONLY HIMSELF FROM HARM!

I HAVE HERE OUR LORD'S SEAL OF OFFICE AND SWORD. ANY WHO DISOBEYS MY ORDERS SHALL BE EXECUTED FOR TREASON.

A TWENTY-SOMETHING YEAR OLD KID THINKS HE CAN KILL THE GREAT ZHANG FEI WHO HAS YET TO BE BEATEN IN BATTLE?

WHAT!?

NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR DOMESTIC SQUABBLES! ZHANG FEI, YOU SHALL DO AS YOU'RE ORDERED!

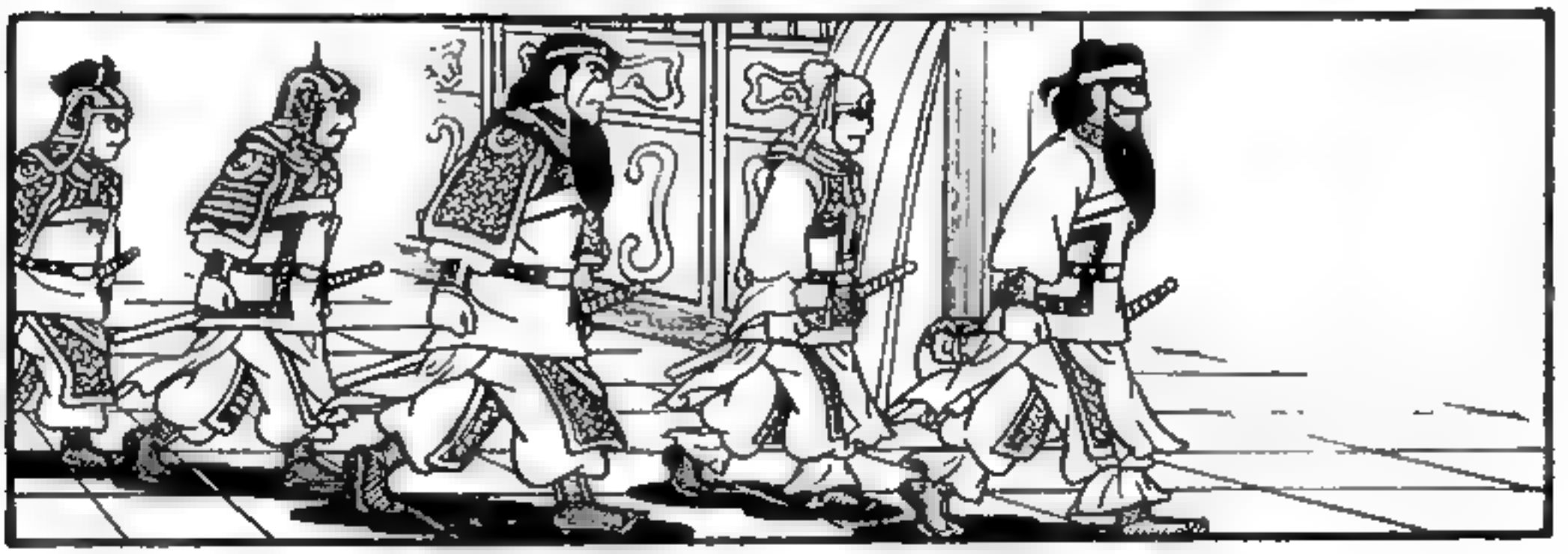
BOTH OF YOU, THAT'S ENOUGH!

ZHANG FEI. IT IS AS KONGMING SAYS. DISOBEY-ING HIM IS EQUAL TO TREASON.

JUST THIS ONCE, LET US OBEY KONGMING'S ORDERS TO SEE HOW SMART HE REALLY IS.

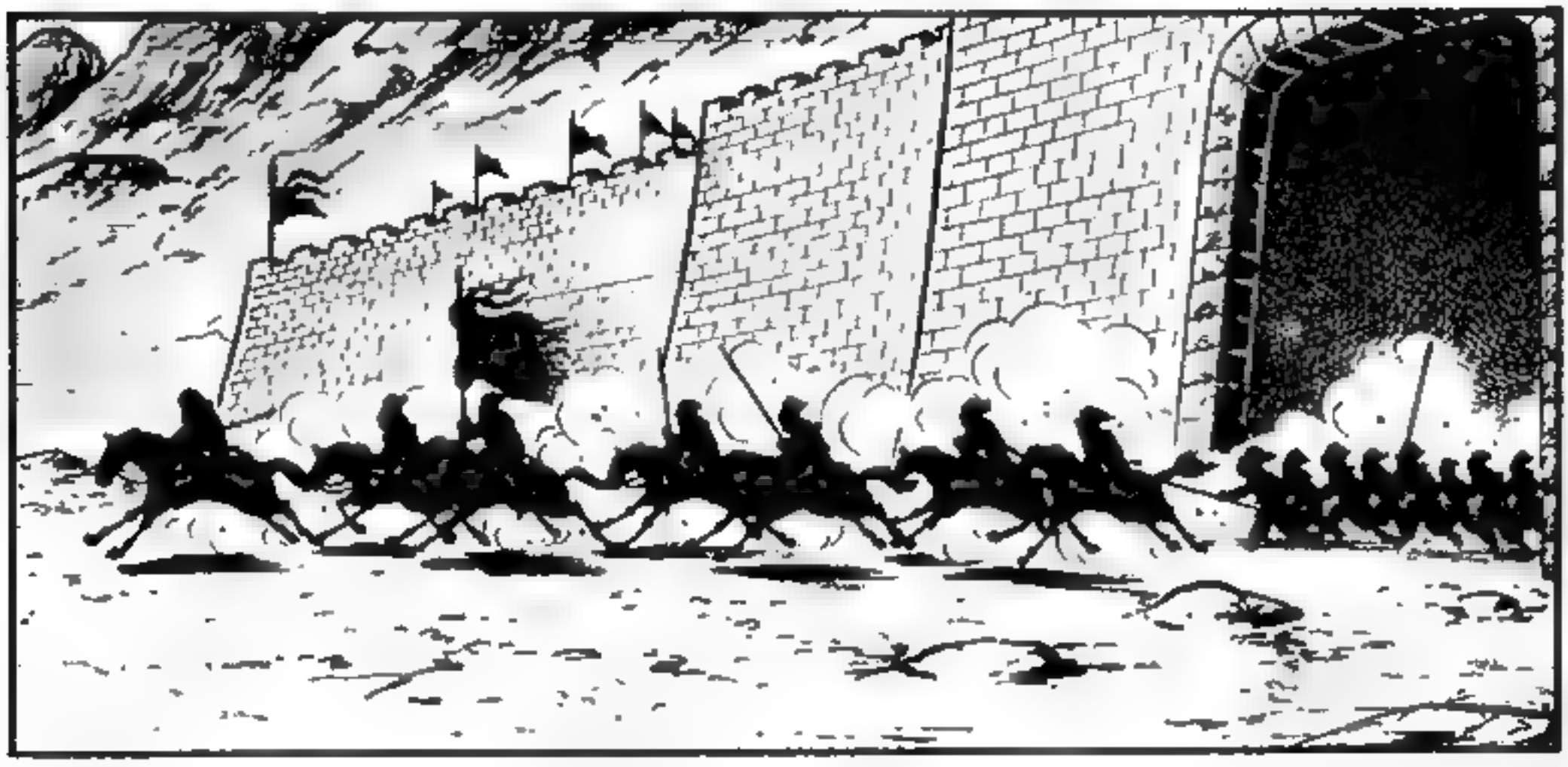
IF YOUR LITTLE PLAN FAILS, DON'T EXPECT ME TO OBEY YOUR ORDERS A SECOND TIME.

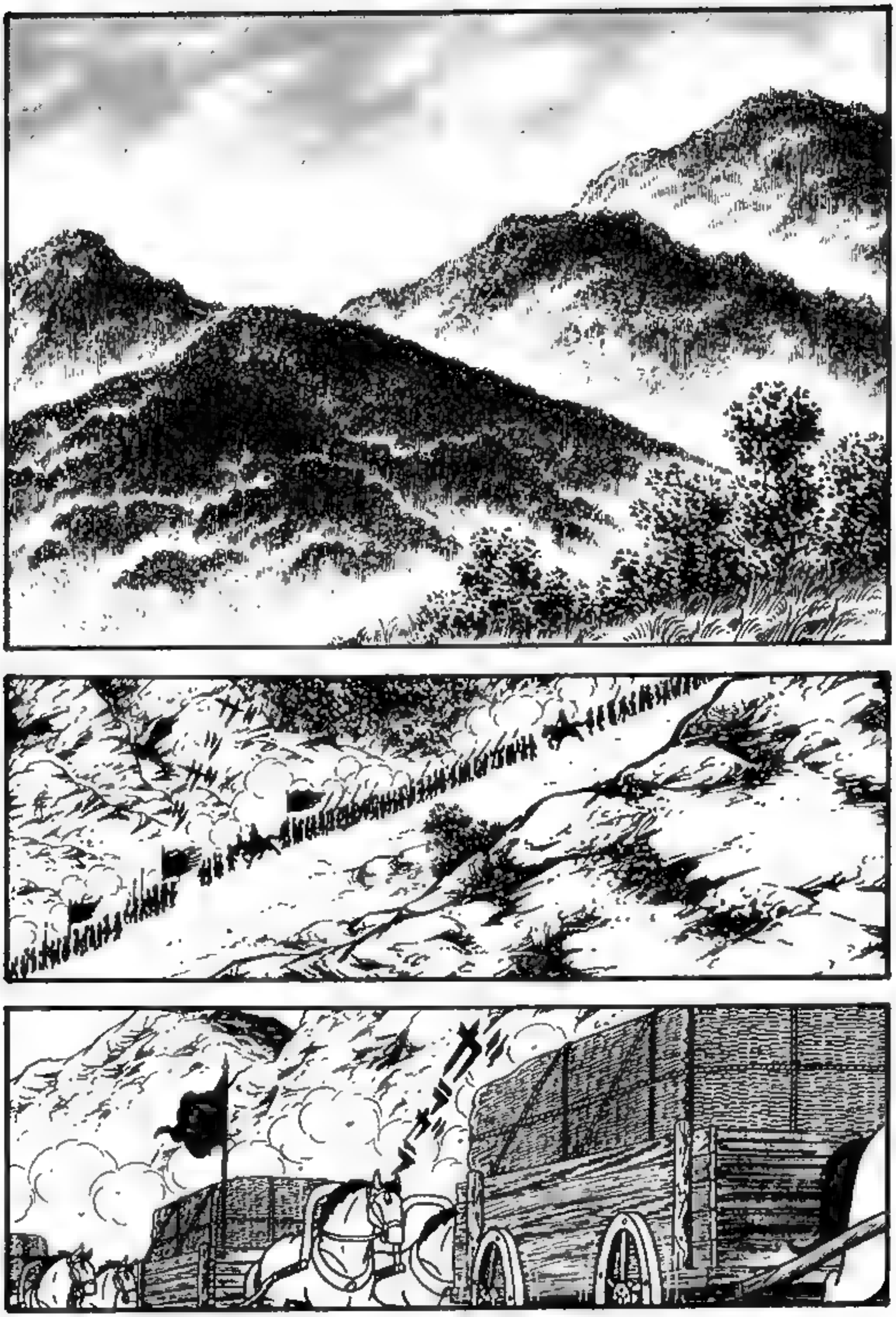
IF THAT'S HOW YOU FEEL, I'LL DO AS YOU SAY, BROTHER.

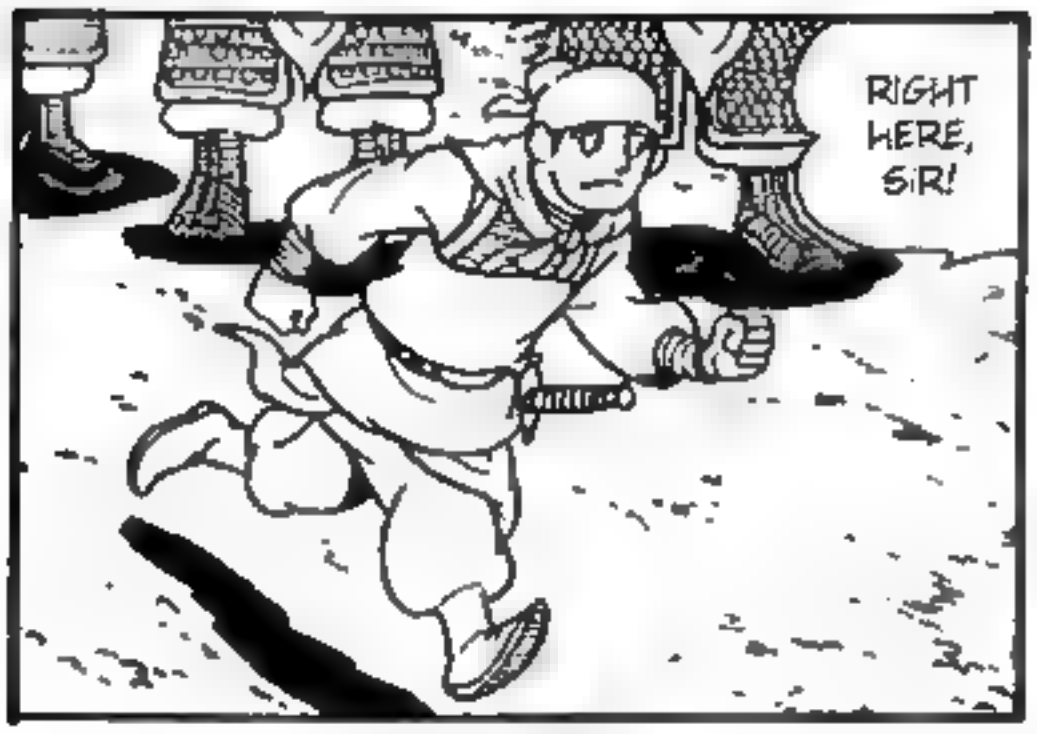


ALRIGHT MEN, LET'S HEAD TO YUSHAN HILLS.

LET US BE OFF TO ANLIN FOREST!

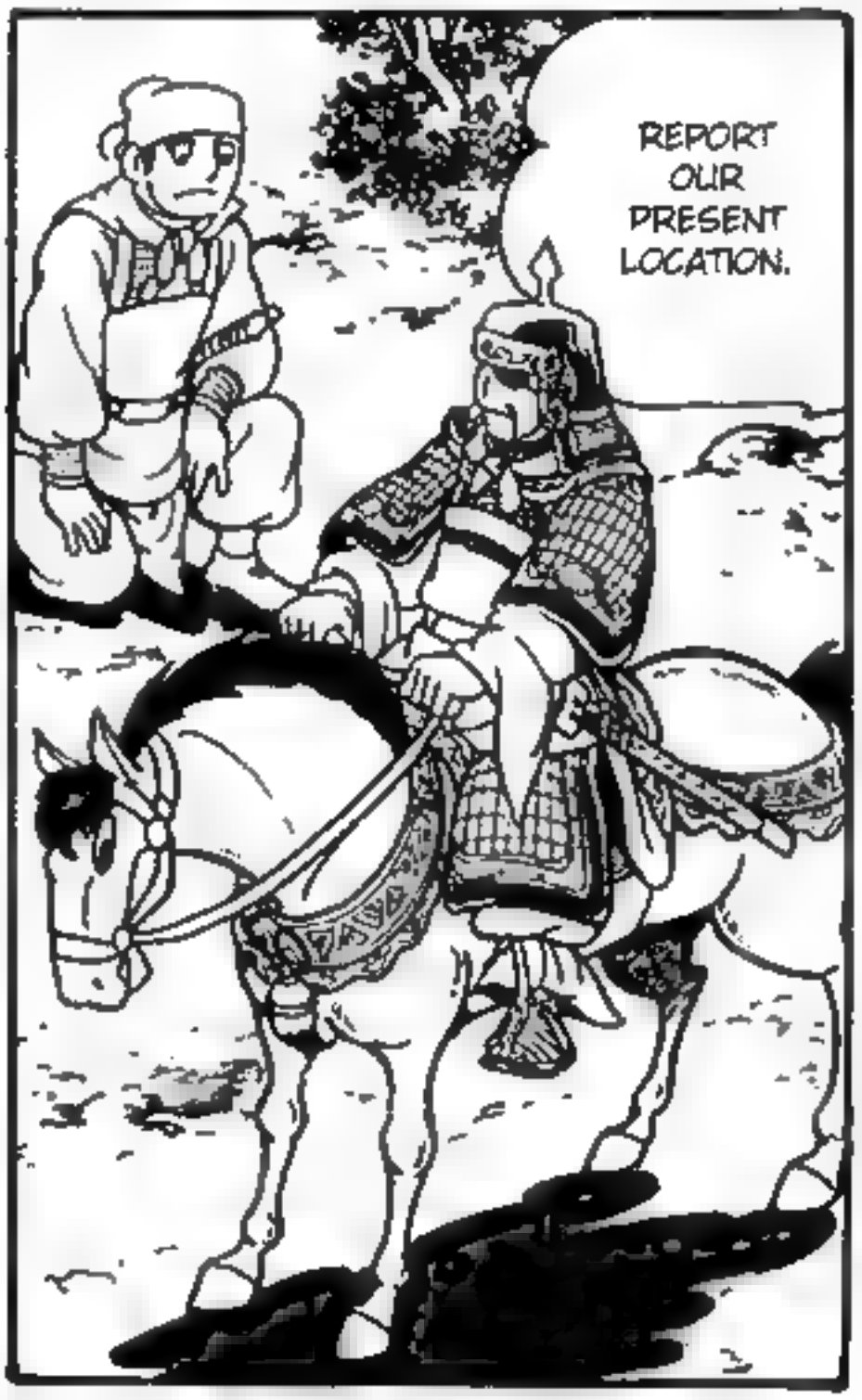





RIGHT HERE, SIR!

SCOUT!

TO OUR RIGHT IS YUSHAN HILLS.


REPORT OUR PRESENT LOCATION.

TO OUR LEFT IS ANLIN FOREST,

SO WE'RE ALMOST AT XINYE CASTLE, THEN.

AND STRAIGHT UP AHEAD IS BOWANG SLOPE.

YES, COMMANDER. ONLY ABOUT 90LI TO GO.

RESUME MARCHING, MEN!

夏侯

*FLAG (夏侯) READS XIAHOU FOR XIAHOU DUN

BUT JUST LOOK AT THEIR NUMBERS!

HA, SO THEY'VE FINALLY COME.

XU SHU SAYS THAT KONGMING'S TALENT IS ALMOST GODLIKE, BUT DOES HE REALLY THINK HE CAN STOP OUR 100,000 SOLDIERS WITH THAT FORMATION AND SUCH FEW MEN?

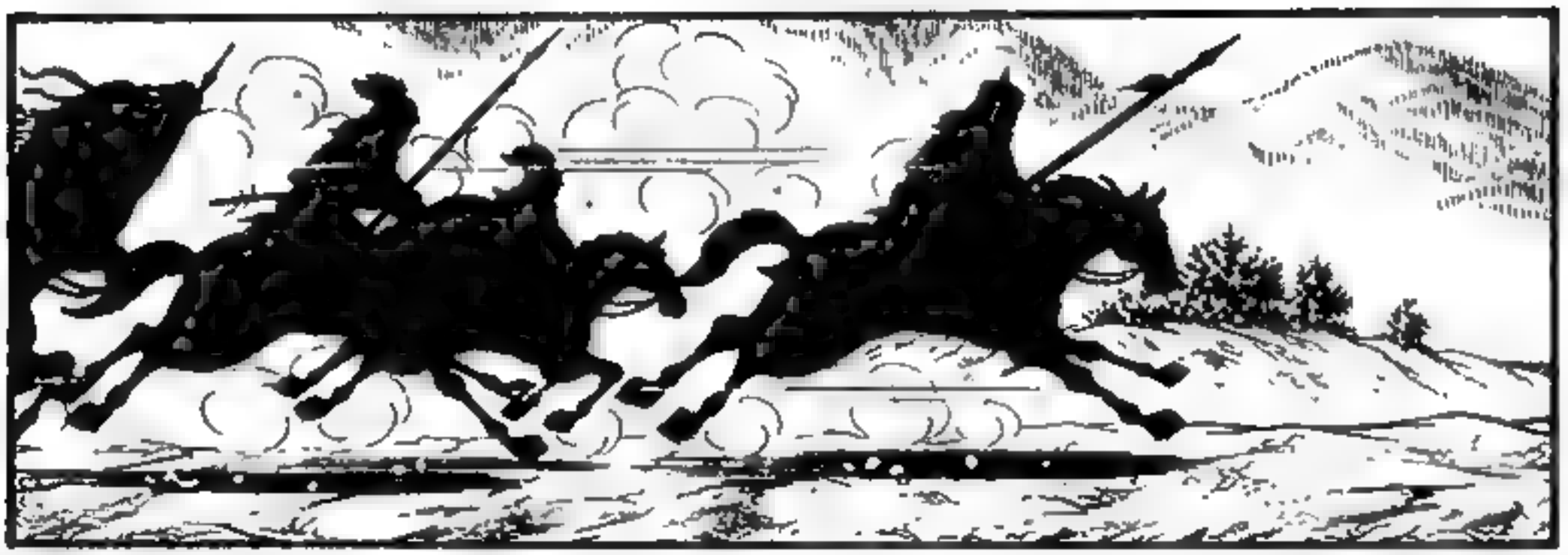
CHARGE! LET US MAKE LIGHT WORK OF THEM!

HAHAHA, THIS'LL BE EASIER THAN I THOUGHT.

I, XIAHOU DUN, WILL PERSONALLY TEACH YOU HOW A WAR SHOULD BE FOUGHT.

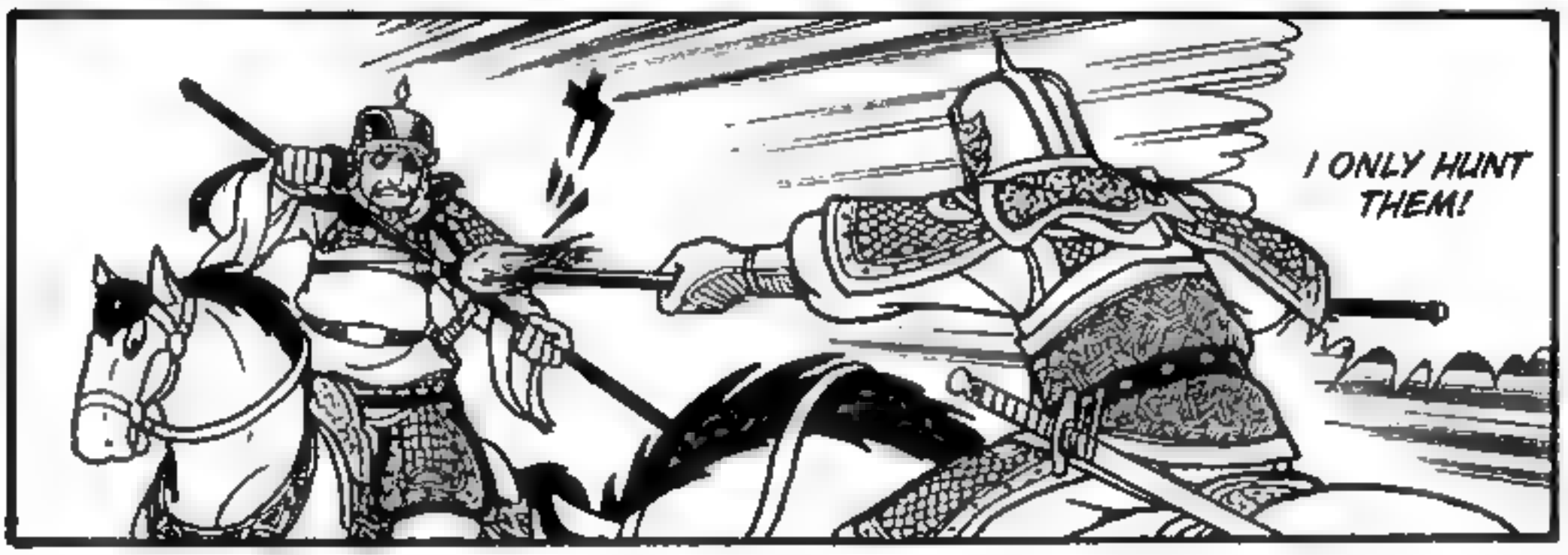
DO NOT FORGET THE PLAN!

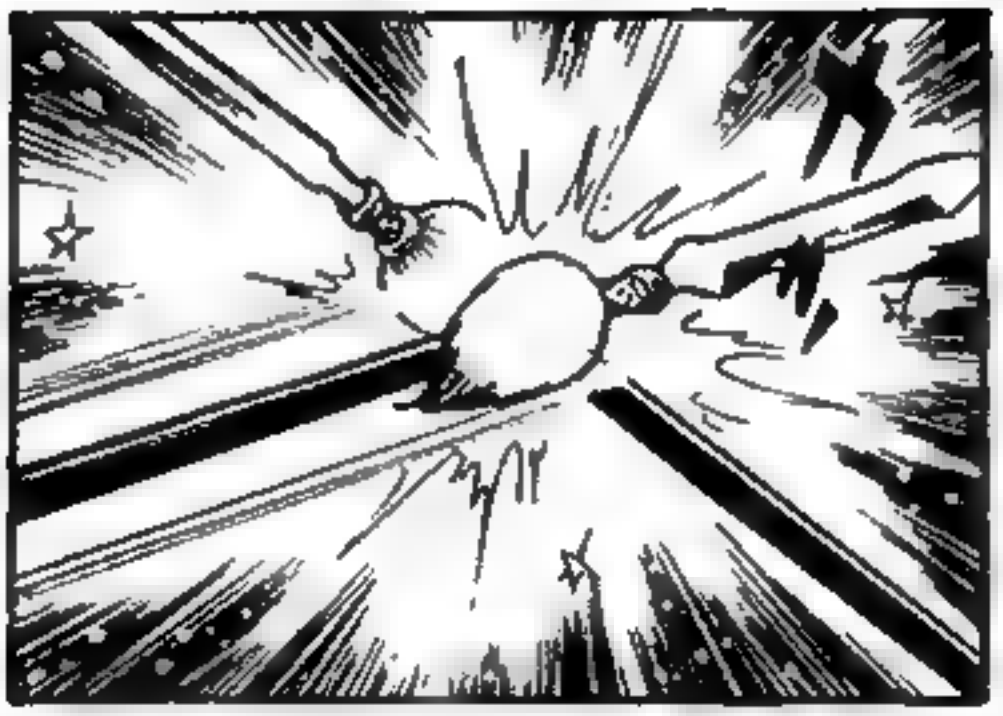
IT'S TIME.

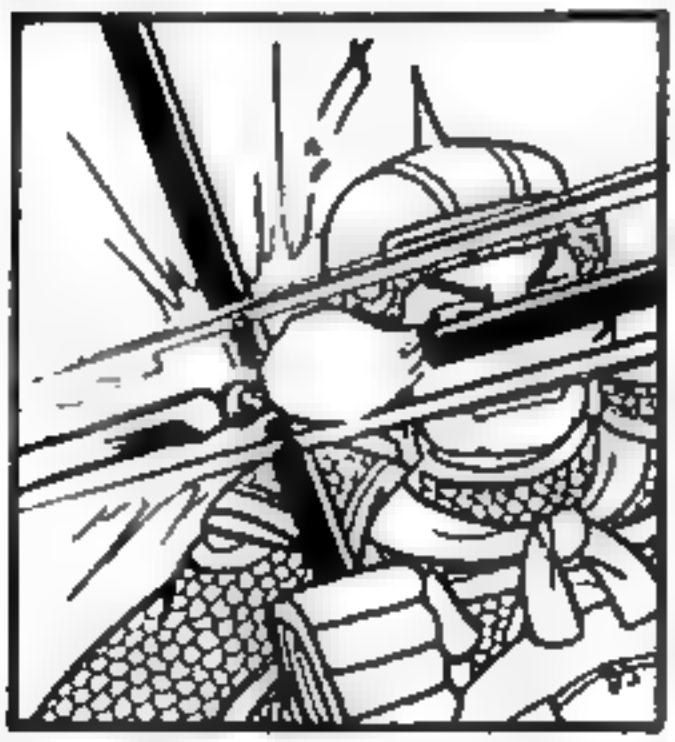


YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE ME BUT I, ZHAO ZILONG, DOES NOT SPEAK BOAR!

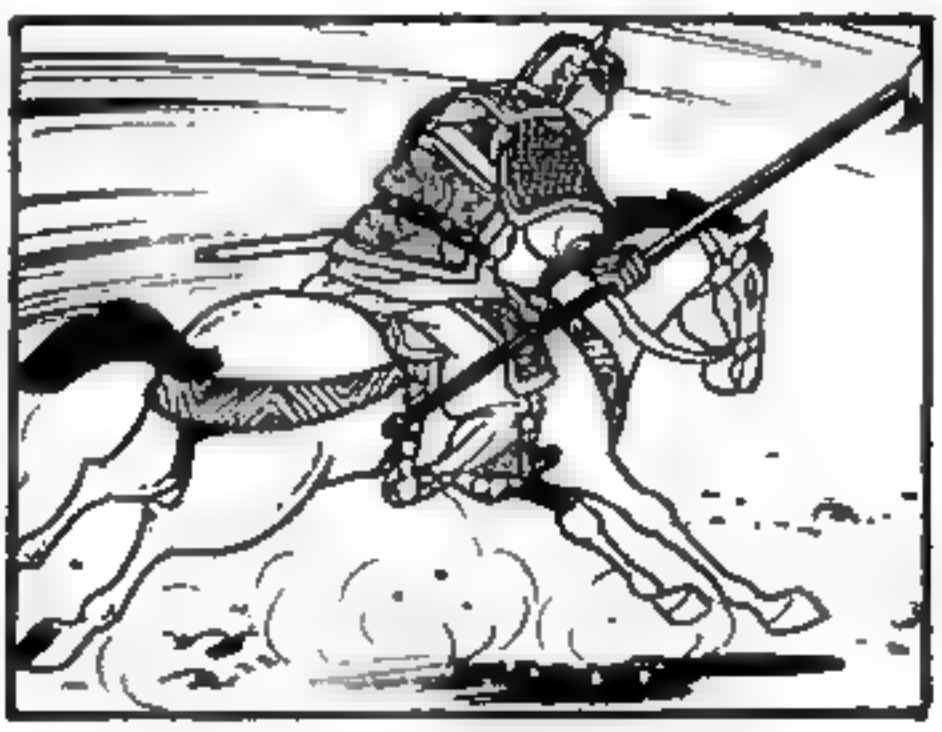
CLEAR THE WAY, YOU VERMINS!

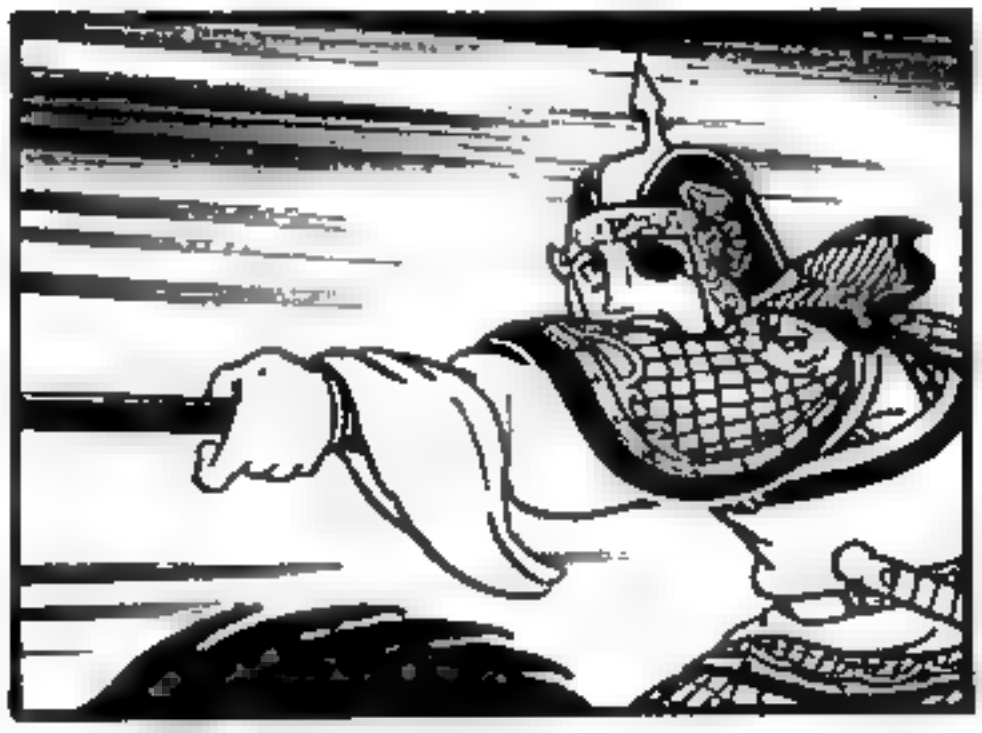

I ONLY HUNT THEM!





IS THAT ALL YOU'VE GOT!?





I WON'T LET YOU ESCAPE!

COWARD!

ZHAO ZILONG'S MOVEMENTS SEEM QUITE SUSPICIOUS. LOOKING AT THE WAY HE ONLY BRIEFLY ATTACKS BEFORE RETREATING FURTHER, I'M QUITE CERTAIN HE'S TRYING TO LEAD US INTO AN AMBUSH.

WHAT IS IT, HAN HAO?

COMMANDER, WAIT! ADVANCING TOO FAR COULD BE DANGEROUS!

AFTER THEM!

HAHAHA! WITH THESE ENEMIES AND OUR NUMBERS, WE NEEDN'T EVEN FEAR TEN AMBUSHES!

*FLAG (劉) READS LIU FOR LIU BEI

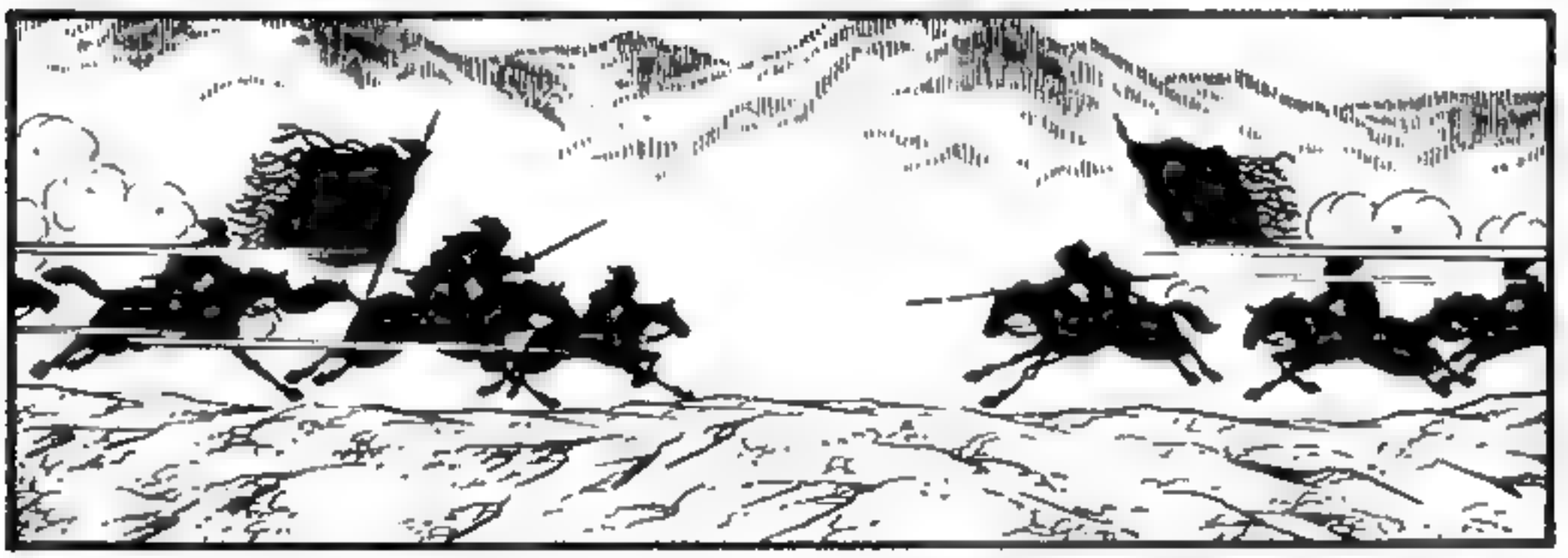
LOOK HOW FEW THEY NUMBER.

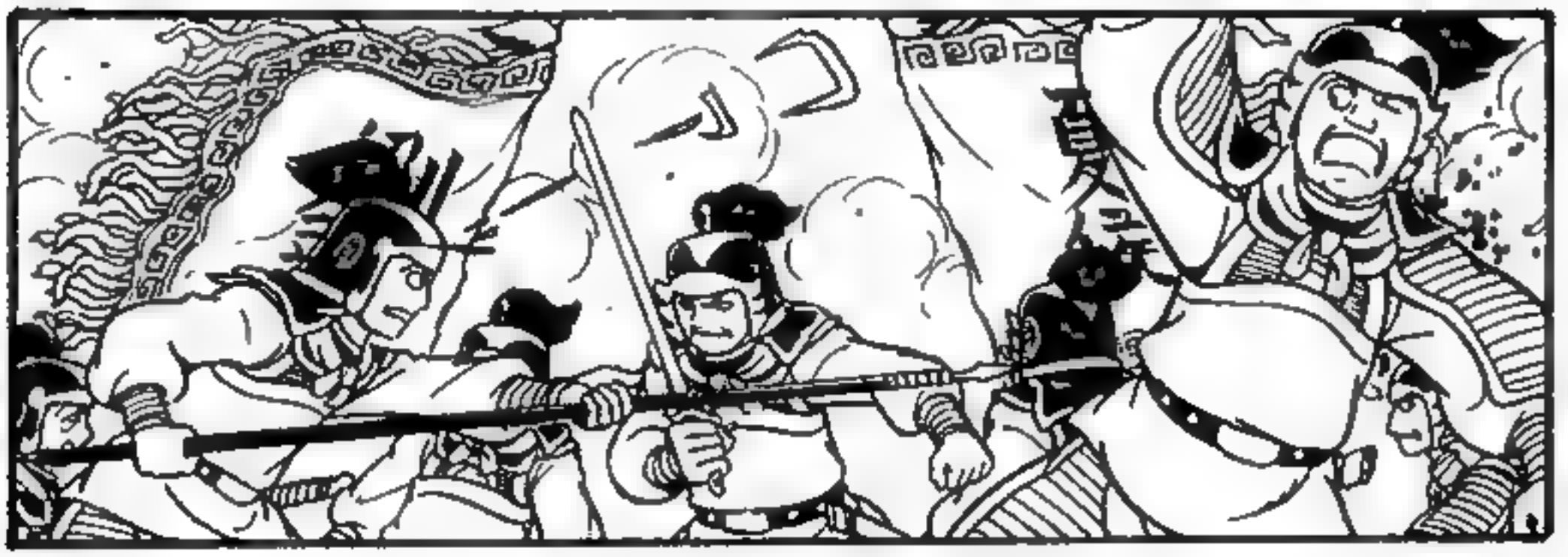
HAHAHA! YOU CALL *THAT* AN AMBUSH?

JUST AS I THOUGHT, IT'S AN AMBUSH!

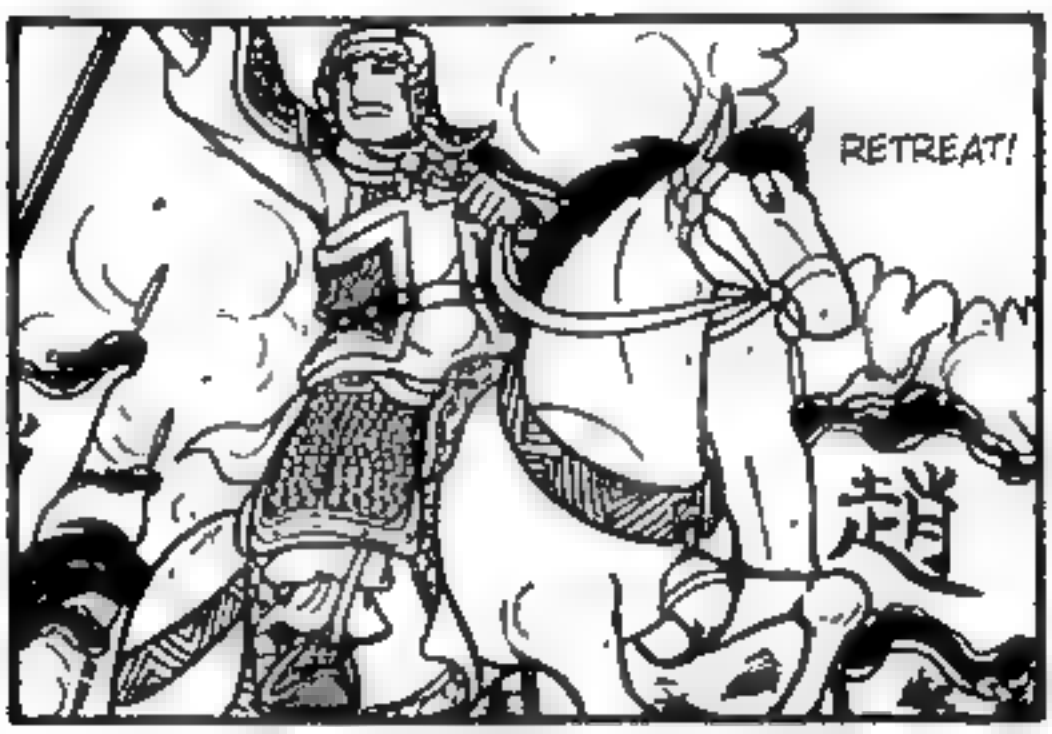
KILL EVERY LAST ONE OF THESE MAGGOTS!

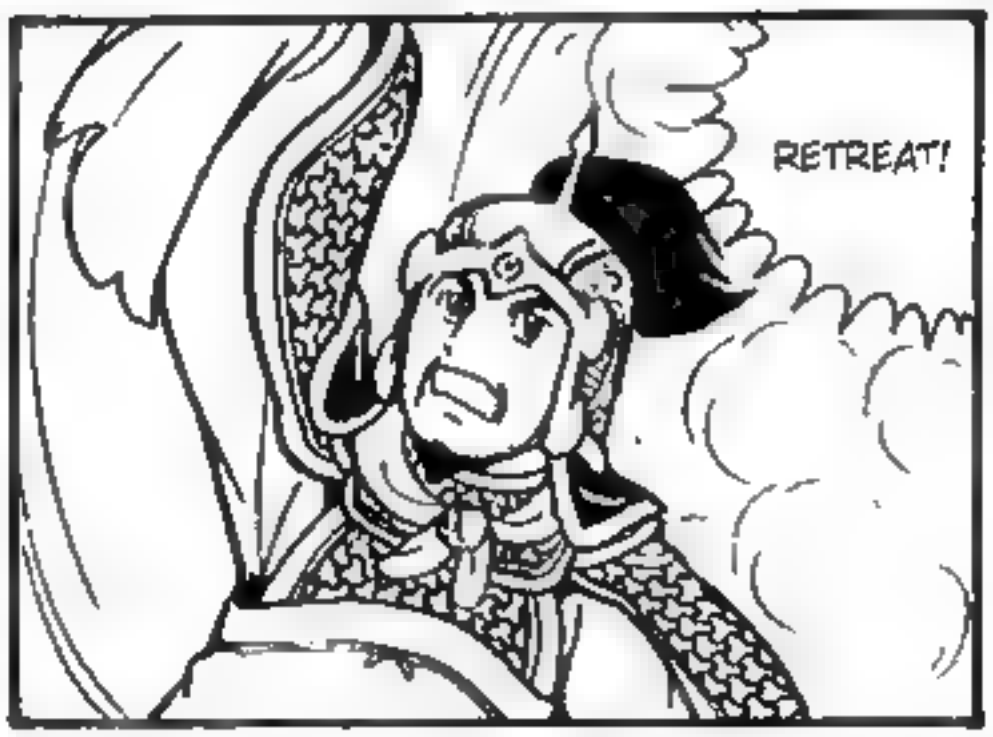
ATTACK!





YES.
I BELIEVE IT'S ABOUT TIME WE RETREAT, MY LORD.


RETREAT!


RETREAT!

SEE THAT, MY MEN? IN FRONT OF OUR OVERWHELMING NUMBERS, NO CLEVER RUSE CAN HOPE TO SAVE THEM!

AHAHAHA! LOOK AT THEM FLEE IN PANIC!

DON'T LET A SINGLE ONE ESCAPE!

WHAT IS IT, LI DIAN?

YU JIN!

WHERE'S OUR COM-MANDER?

RUSHING TOO DEEP MIGHT BE RISKY...

THE COMMANDER HAS CONTINUED TO PURSUE THE FLEEING ENEMY. SINCE WE'RE IN CHARGE OF THE REAR AND THESE SUPPLIES, WE'RE ABOUT 2LI BEHIND HIM.

WHICH ONE DO YOU MEAN?

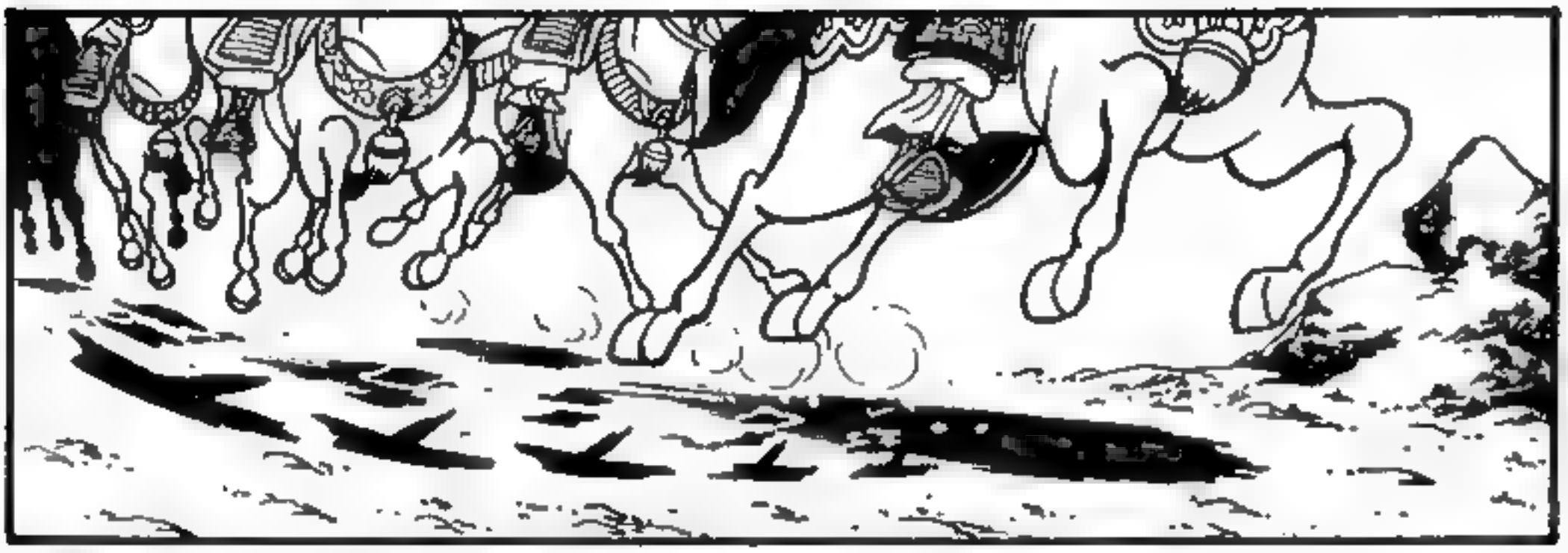
TRUE, BUT I WAS THINKING ABOUT ONE OF THE BASIC TACTICS OF WAR.

RISKY? BUT WE PRACTICALLY OUTNUMBER OUR ENEMIES BY 10 TIMES.

"WHEN THE ROADS BECOME NARROW AND THE SURROUNDING FORESTS DENSE, BEWARE OF FIRE."

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, THIS TERRAIN IS QUITE SUITABLE FOR SUCH A TACTIC.

YES.
ALRIGHT THEN. YOU GUARD THE REAR WHILE I RUSH TO THE VANGUARD AND WARN OUR COMMANDER.



SEEMS LIKE RUNNING AWAY IS THE ONLY THING THOSE FOOLS CAN DO WELL.
I DON'T SEE ANY SIGHT OF OUR ENEMIES, COMMANDER.

WELL, WHATEVER. WE CAN ALWAYS FINISH THEM OFF TOMORROW.

HM?

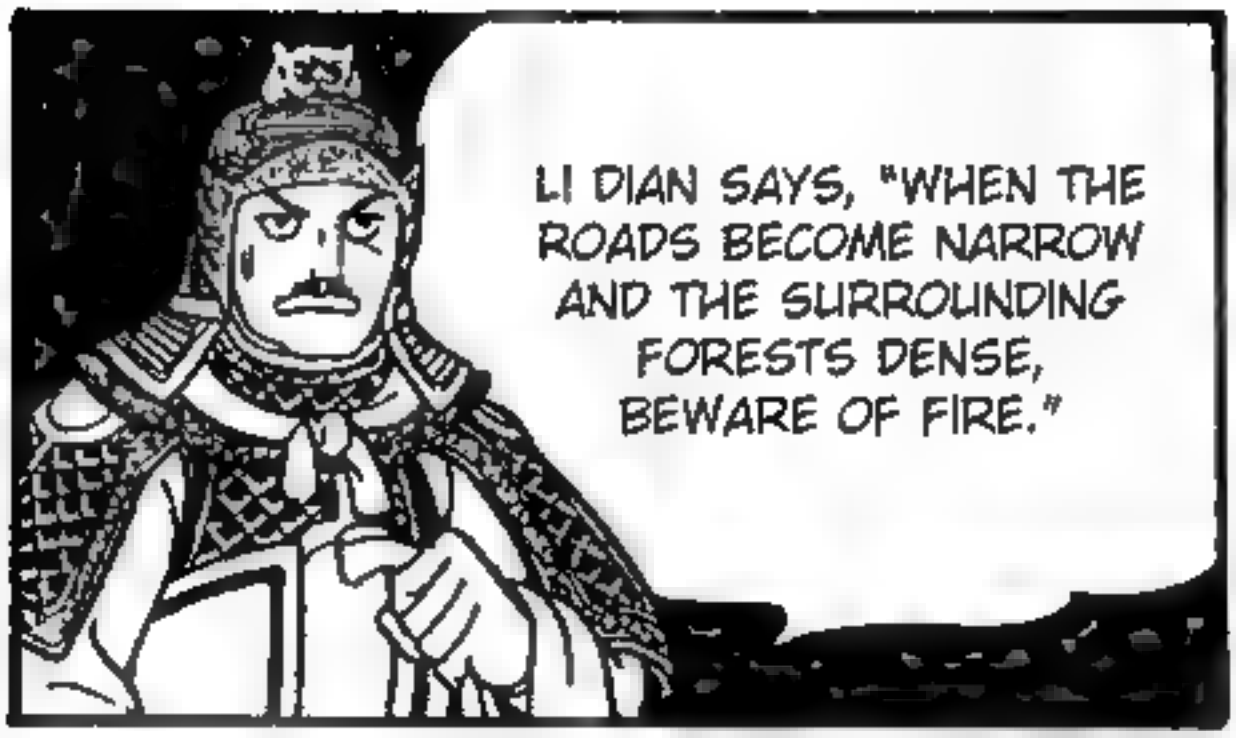
COMMANDER!

YU JIN?

IT'S GENERAL YU JIN WHO'S ENTASKED WITH GUARDING THE REAR.

I CAME TO DISSUADE SIR FROM ADVANCING ANY FARTHER FOR TODAY.

WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?


LI DIAN SAYS, "WHEN THE ROADS BECOME NARROW AND THE SURROUNDING FORESTS DENSE, BEWARE OF FIRE."

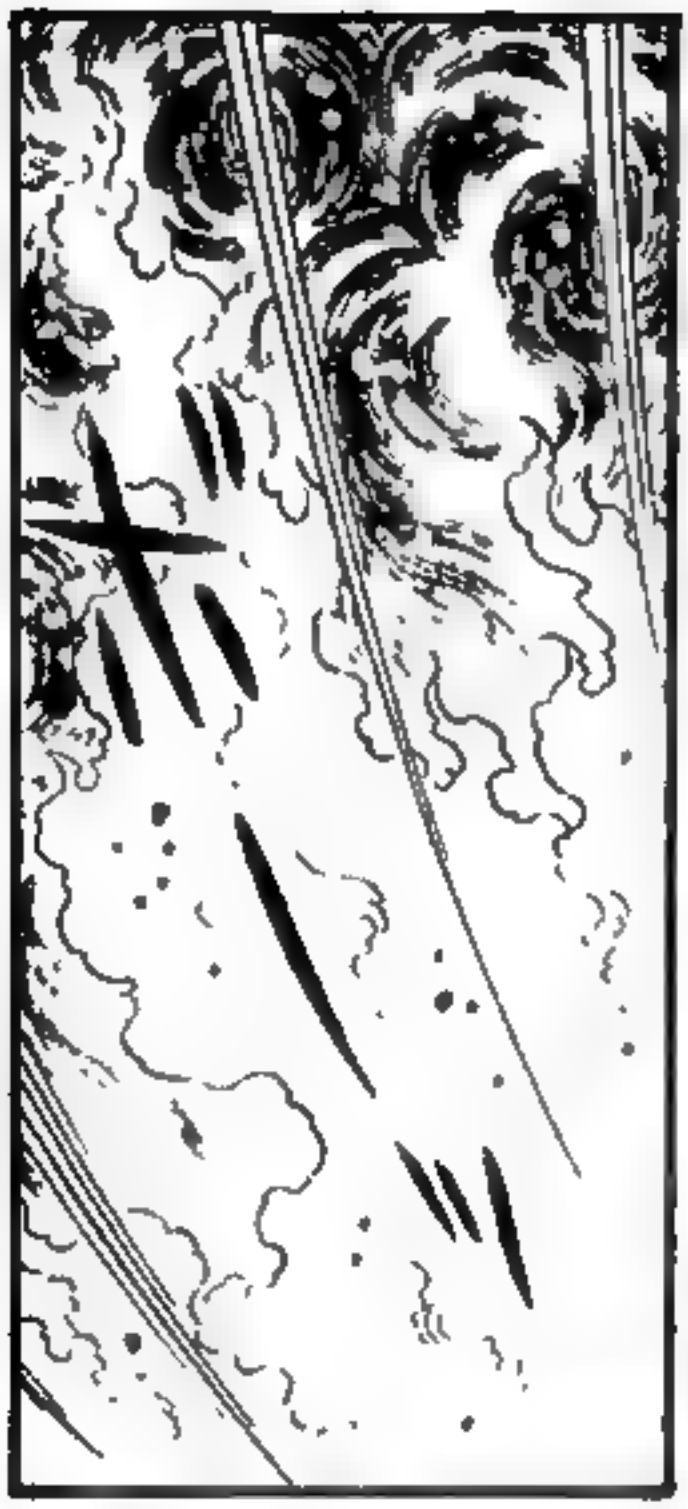
AND WHY IS THAT?

HMM...
YES, THESE DENSE FORESTS WOULD MAKE IT IDEAL FOR FIRE.

HE SHOULD'VE TOLD ME SOONER...

KONGMING IS A MASTER OF ASTROLOGY, GEOGRAPHY, AND HUMAN NATURE. NOT ONLY THAT, HE IS WELL-VERSED IN THE SIX SECRET TEACHINGS AND OTHER MILITARY TREATISES.

AH!



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J-JUST AS I FEARED!

AHH!

THE ENEMIES MUST'VE SET UP COMBUSTI-BLES!

THE FIRE'S SPREADING UNUSUALLY QUICK!

RETREAT!

YES.

WE'LL BE SURROUNDED AT THIS RATE, COMMANDER! WE MUST RETREAT IMMEDIATELY.

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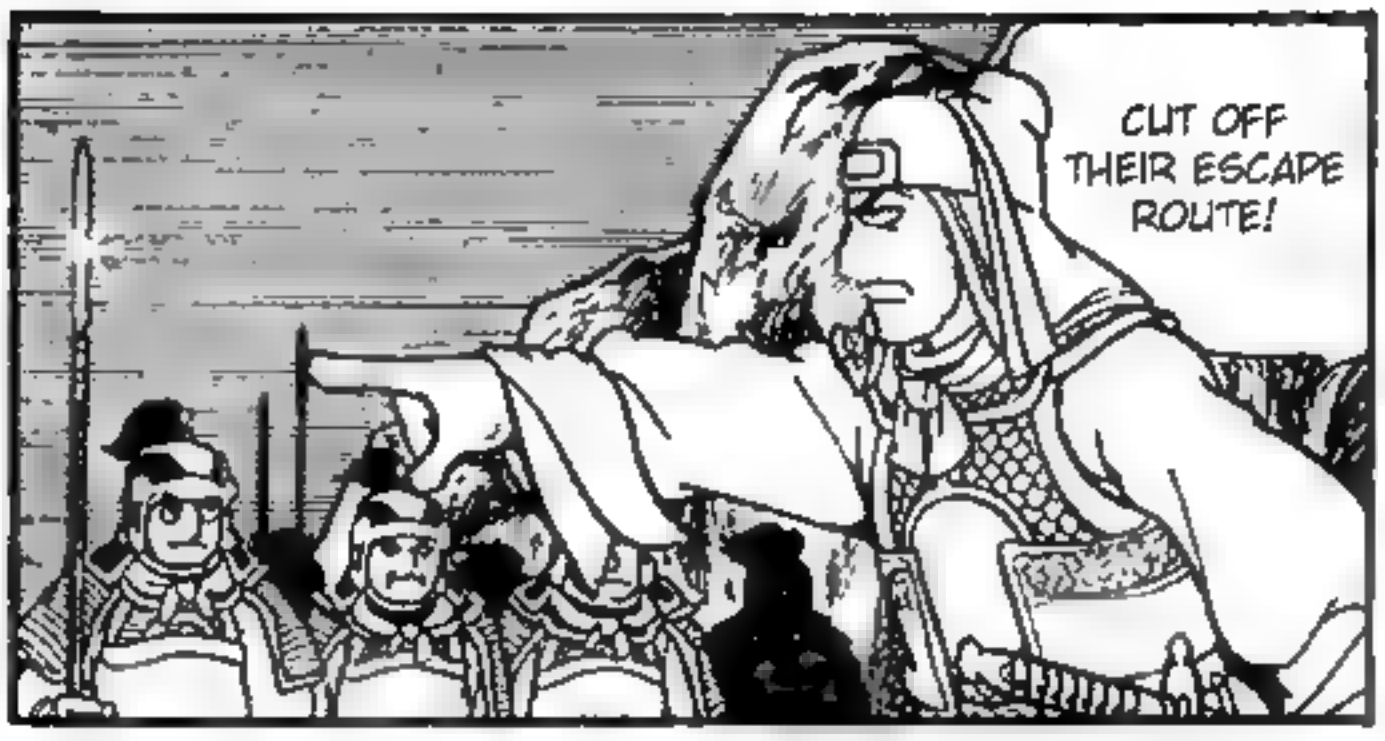
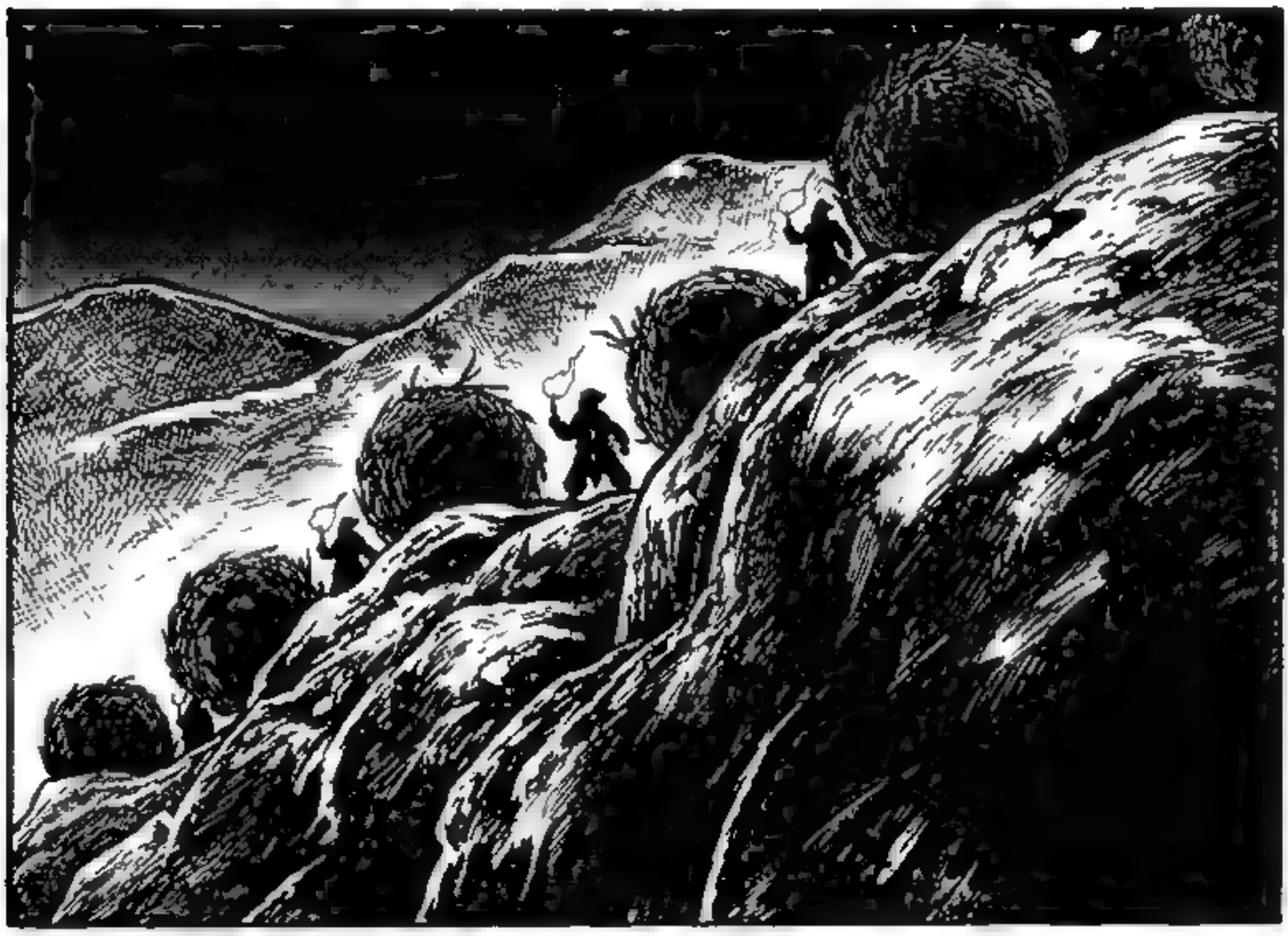

CUT OFF THEIR ESCAPE ROUTE!

THEY'RE HERE.



NOW!

PUSH!

AGHH!

AHH!

GAHHH!

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AGHH!

*FLAG (李) READS LI FOR LI DIAN

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IT'S AN AMBUSH!

GUAN YU
SHALL BE
YOUR MATCH
TONIGHT!

AGHH!

NOT GOOD...

SIR! FIRES HAVE STARTED UP AHEAD AND BEHIND US!

HMM?

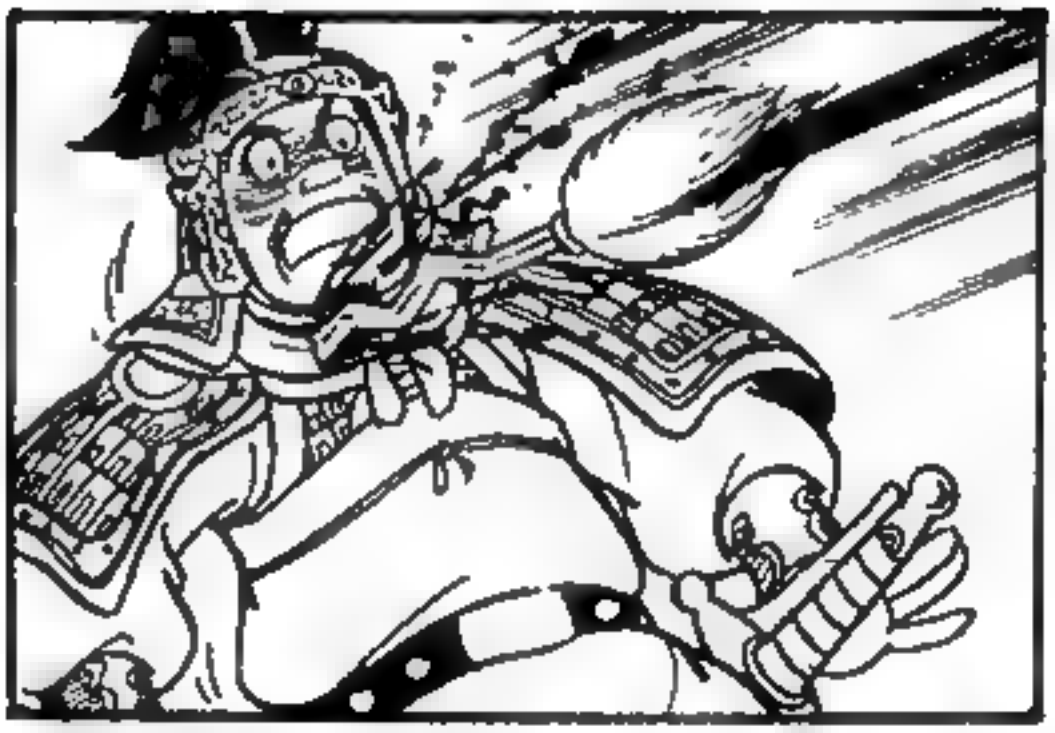
LISTEN UP, MEN! WE, THE MIDDLE GUARD, SHALL ADVANCE TO PROTECT THE COMMANDER!

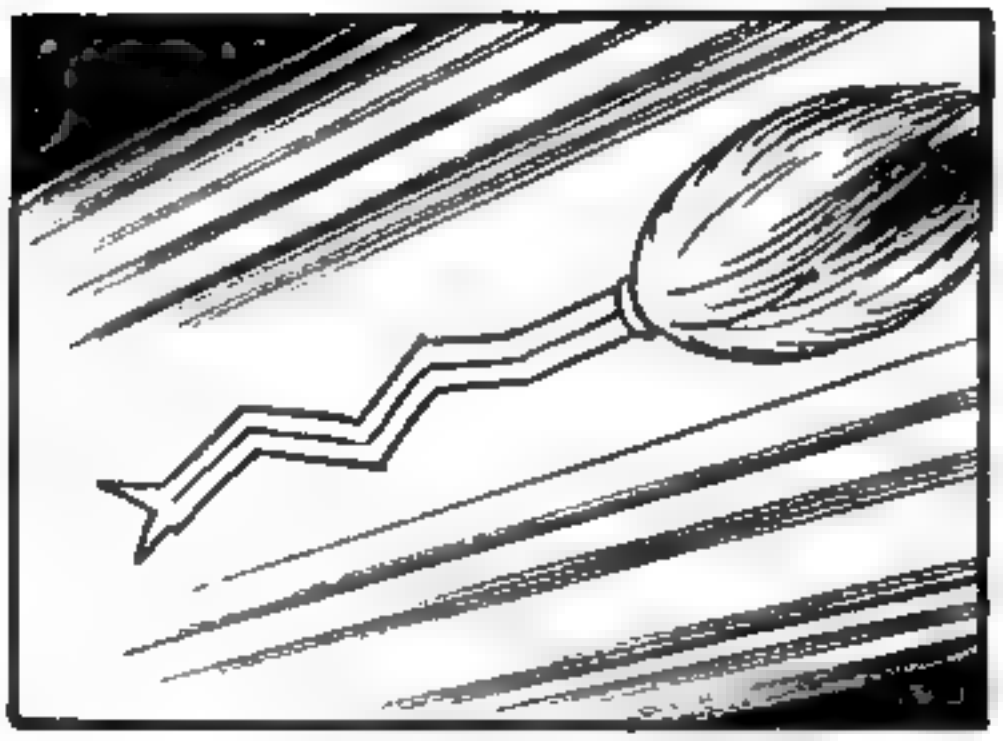
ABOUT TIME YOU SLOWPOKES GOT HERE! I, ZHANG FEI, SHALL BE YOUR MATCH TONIGHT!

ISN'T THAT THE MAN WHO'S SUPPOSEDLY EVEN STRONGER THAN GUAN YU?

Z-ZHANG FEI...!?

WHY, YES INDEED! ALLOW ME TO DEMONSTRATE!

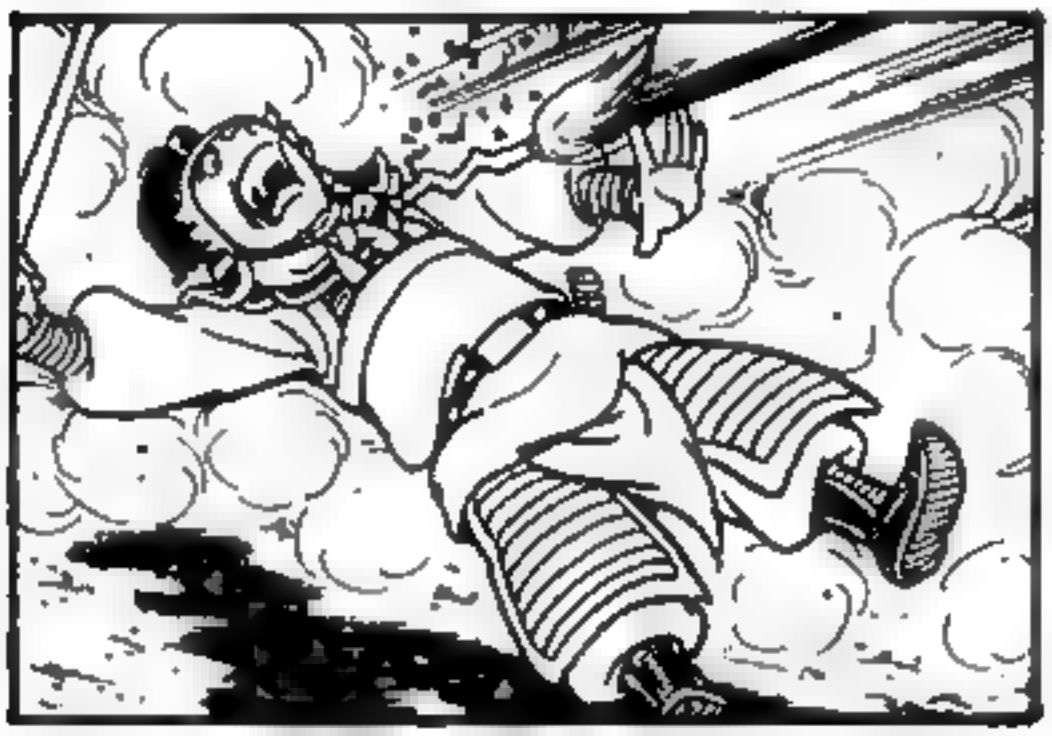


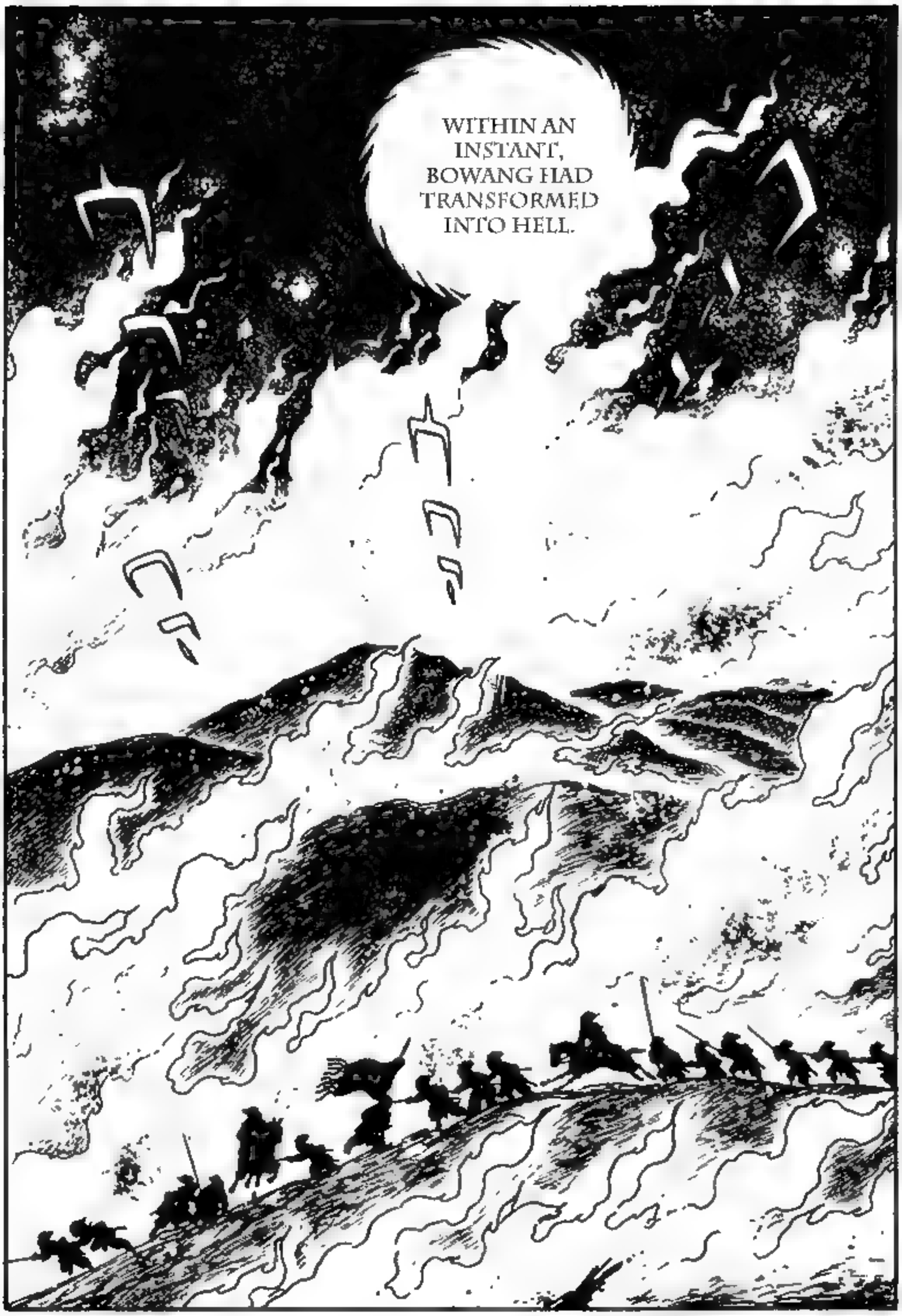


ARGHHH!

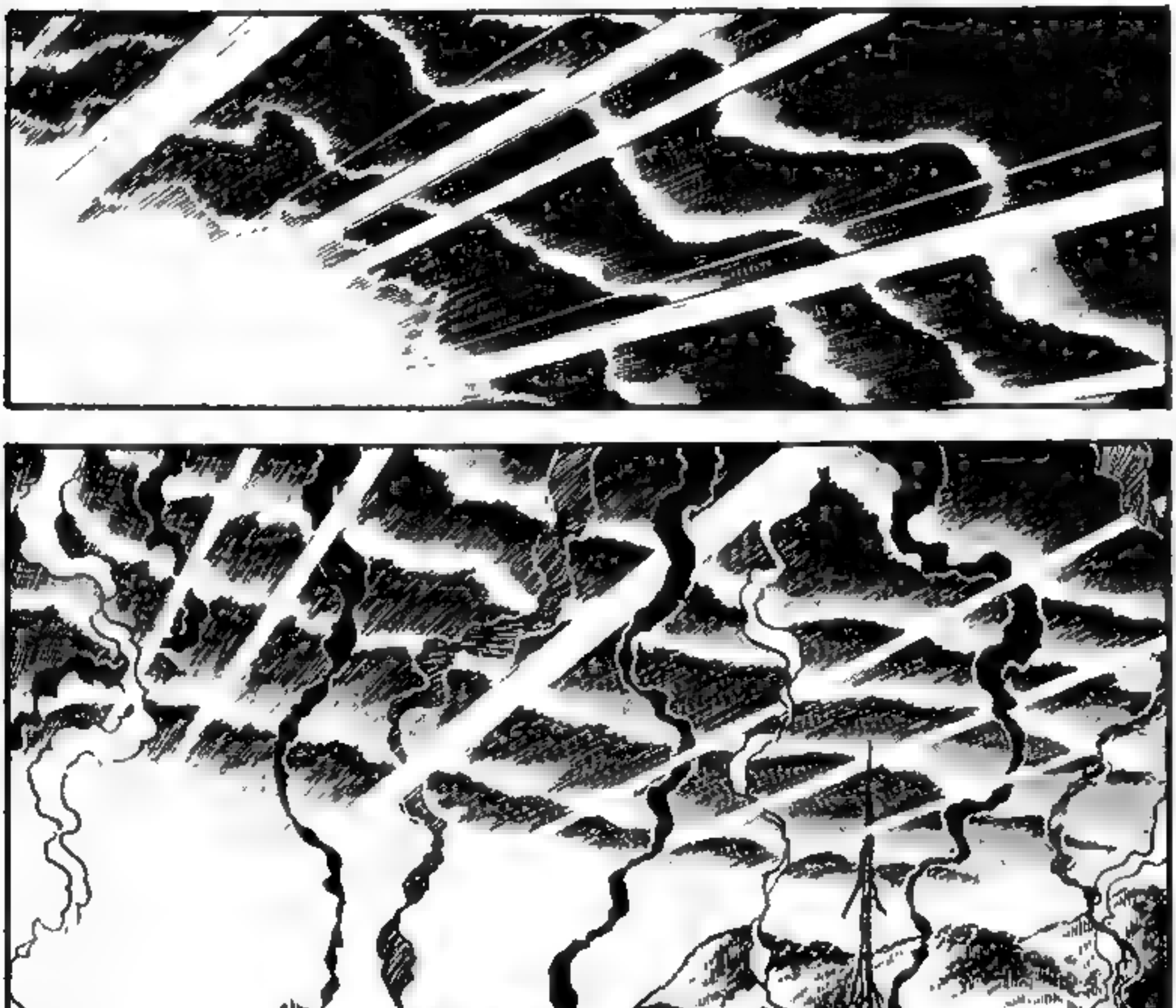
AGH!

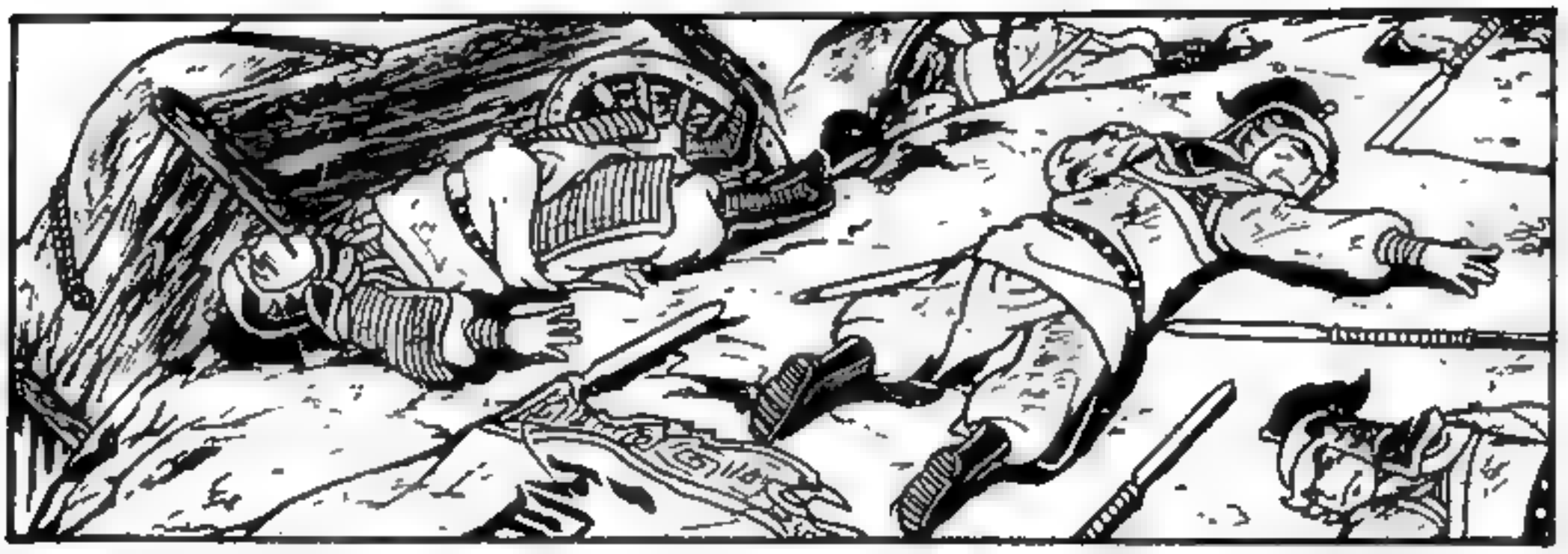
ACK!

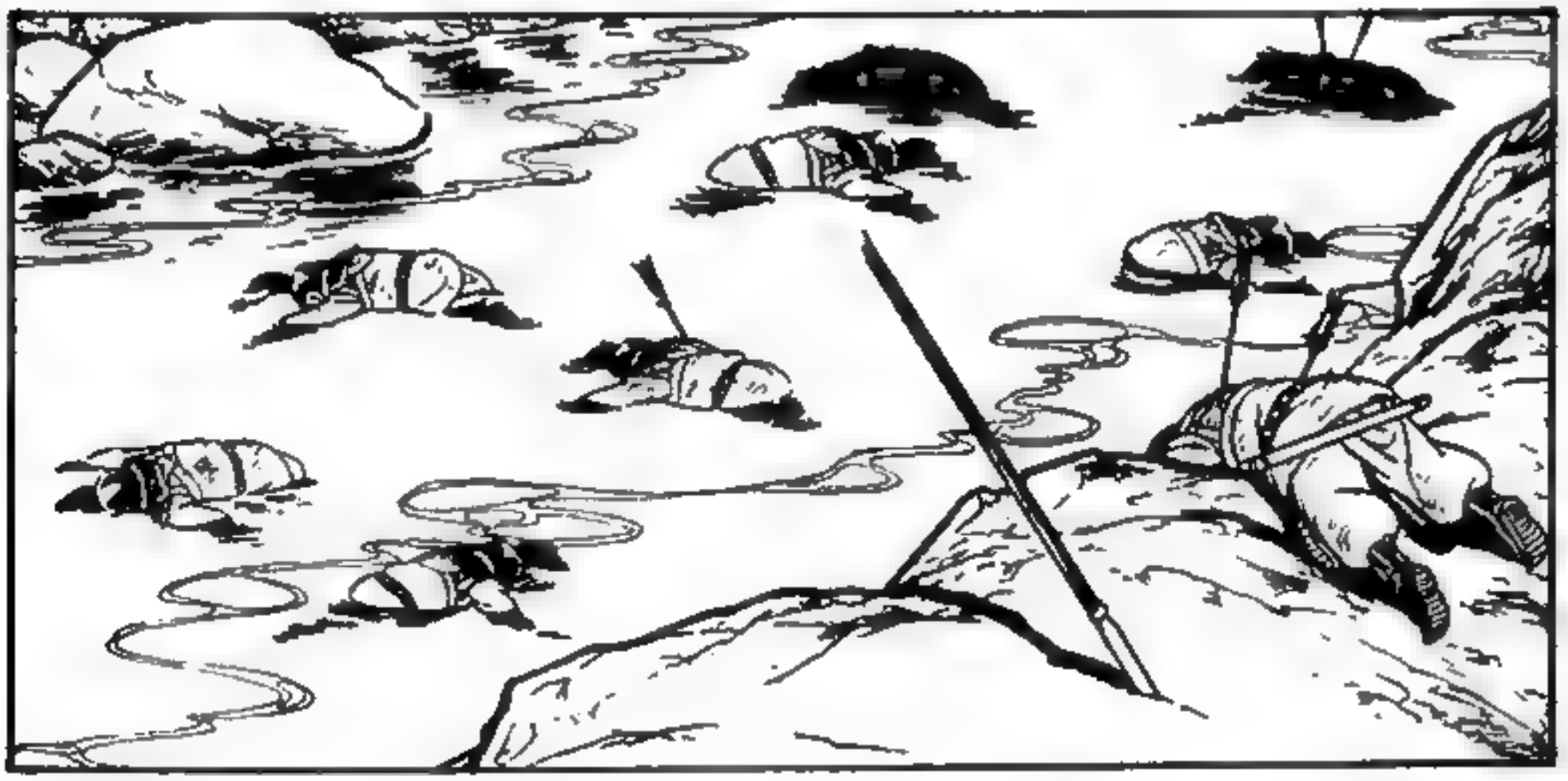



WITHIN AN INSTANT, BOWANG HAD TRANSFORMED INTO HELL.

UNSATISFYING VICTORY WINE







I NEVER THOUGHT THINGS WOULD GO THIS WELL.

THERE MUST BE AT LEAST 30,000 DEAD FOR THE ENEMIES.

USING THE WORD "ANNIHILATION" WOULD BE NO EXAGGERATION.

NOT TO MENTION SEVERAL TENS OF THOUSANDS WOUNDED.

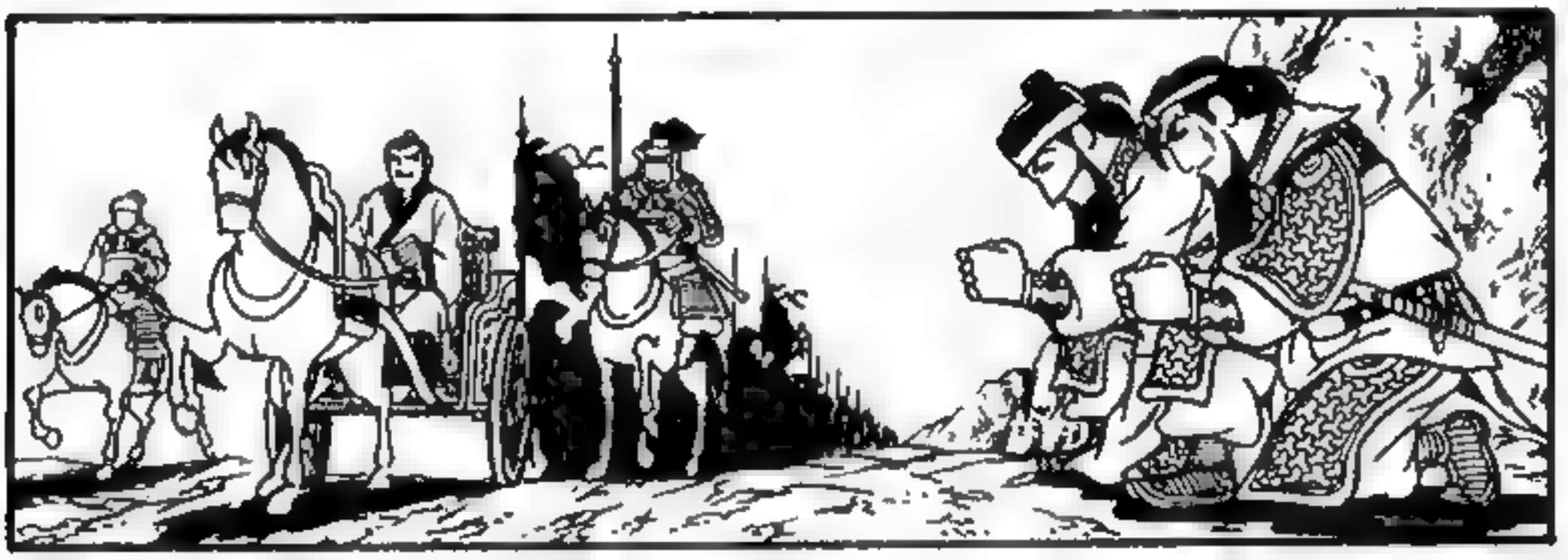
YES, WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO RECOGNIZE HIS TALENT.

IT SEEMS KONGMING REALLY DOES KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING.

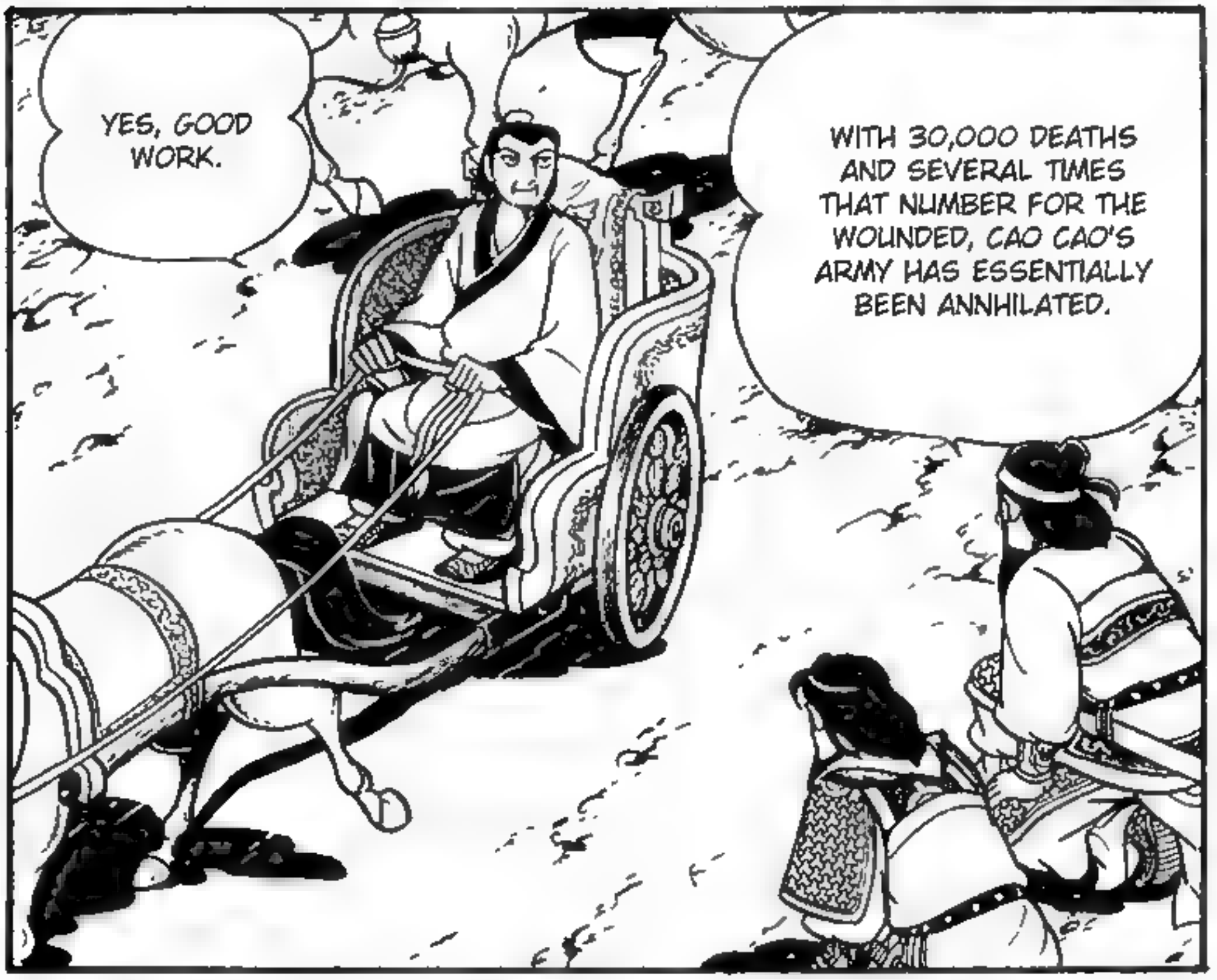
HM?

LET US GO MAKE OUR REPORTS.

IT'S KONG-MING.



ALLOW US TO MAKE OUR REPORTS.


YES, GOOD WORK.
WITH 30,000 DEATHS AND SEVERAL TIMES THAT NUMBER FOR THE WOUNDED, CAO CAO'S ARMY HAS ESSENTIALLY BEEN ANNHILATED.

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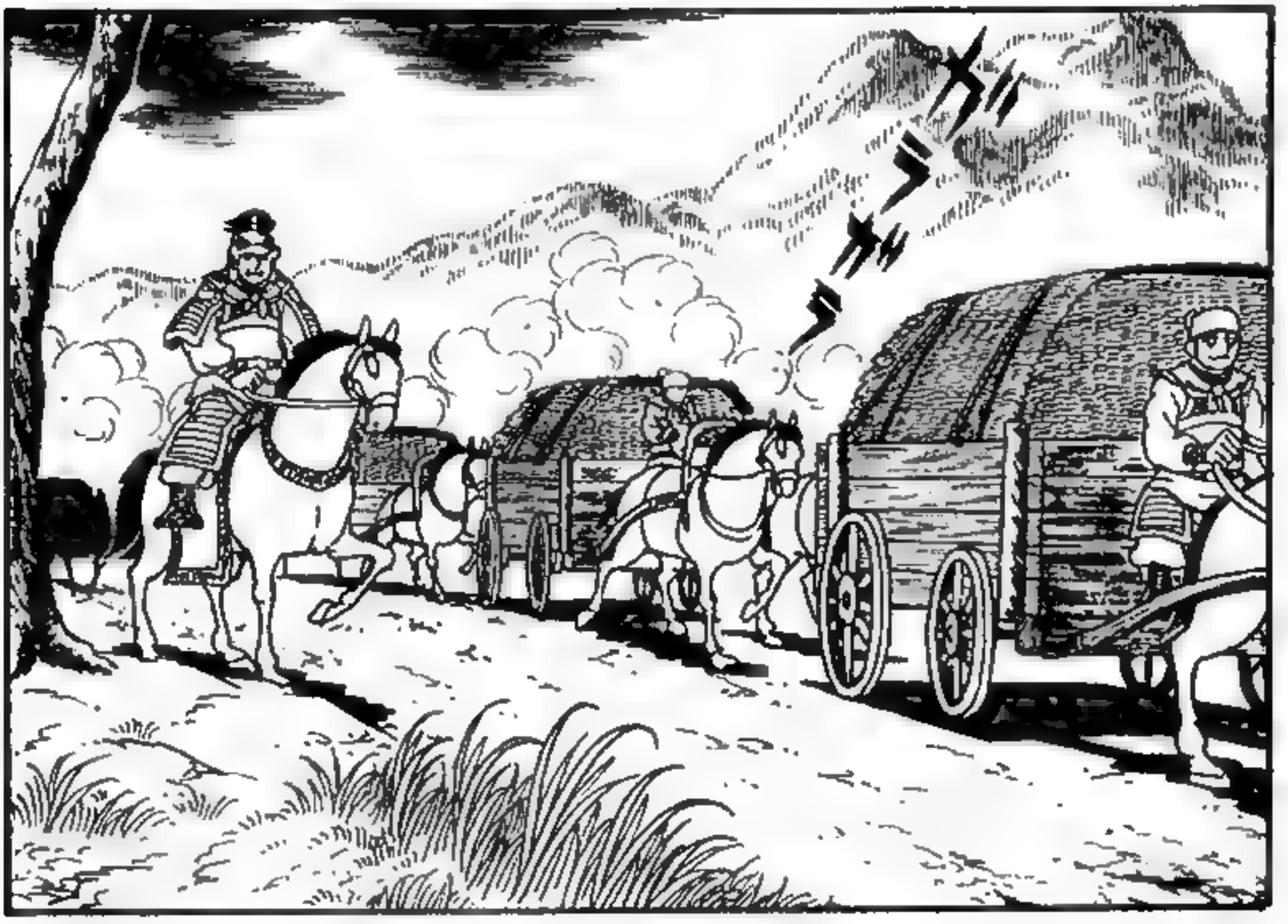
OUR VICTORY WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE IF NOT FOR THE BRAVERY EXHIBITED BY ALL YOU MEN.

HEY, ISN'T THAT YOUR ADOPTED SON, GUAN PING?



YES, THESE ARE THE BULK OF OUR ENEMY'S FOOD AND SUPPLIES.

ARE THOSE THE SPOILS OF WAR?

WELL, WELL! ISN'T THIS QUITE GENEROUS OF THEM!?

LOOK! HERE COMES OUR LORD!

THE BATTLE HAS ENDED IN OUR GREAT VICTORY.

MY LORD!

YES, I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU ALL FOR FIGHTING BRAVELY.

LONG LIVE KONGMING!
LONG LIVE LORD LIU BEI!

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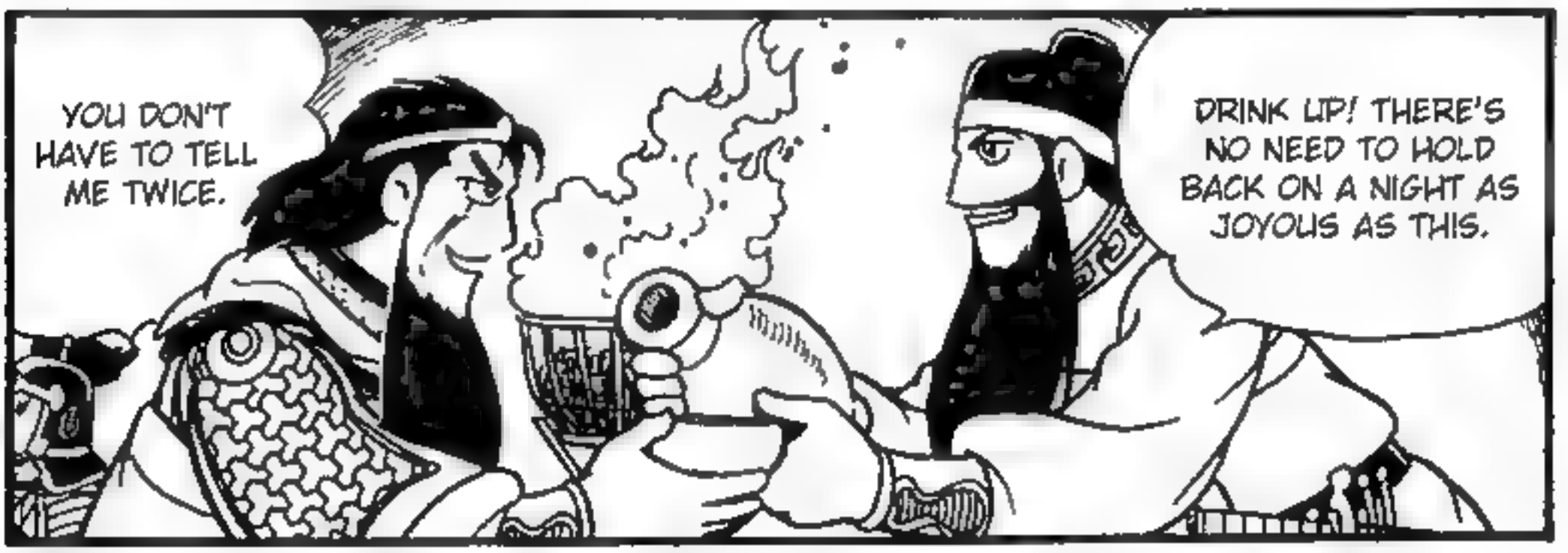

YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME TWICE.
DRINK UP! THERE'S NO NEED TO HOLD BACK ON A NIGHT AS JOYOUS AS THIS.

TELL THAT CAO CAO TO COME ANYTIME IF HE DARES!

HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN SINCE WE LAST CELEBRATED LIKE THIS?

WHO'LL BE OUR NEXT PREY!?

IF HE COMES, WE'LL CRUSH HIS ARMY AGAIN AND AGAIN!

I'M AFRAID IT'S STILL TOO EARLY TO CELEBRATE, MY LORD.

I'VE NEVER WON SUCH A GREAT VICTORY IN ALL MY YEARS OF BATTLE. THANK YOU AGAIN, KONGMING.

CAO CAO WILL!?

NOW THAT BOTH CAO REN AND XIAHOU DUN'S ARMIES HAVE BEEN DEFEATED, CAO CAO WILL PERSONALLY LEAD THE NEXT ATTACK.

AN OFFENSIVE PERSONALLY LED BY CAO CAO IS NO ORDINARY CRISIS.

YES, FOR CERTAIN, MY LORD. THE ONLY UNCERTAINTY IS WHEN.

YES, A SMALL CASTLE LIKE OURS SHALL BE UTTERLY DESTROYED.

HE HAS ALREADY CONQUERED JIBEI, LIAODONG, LIAOXI, AND ALL OF THE NORTHERN DOMAIN FORMERLY HELD BY YUAN SHAO. WITH SUCH VAST RESOURCES TO DRAW FROM, IF CAO CAO SERIOUSLY BEGINS A SOUTHERN OFFENSIVE...

YES, BUT EVEN IF WE LEFT, THE ONLY PLACE WE CAN HOPE TO MATCH CAO CAO IS...

DO YOU SUGGEST LEAVING XINYE THEN?

JINGZHOU.

THAT CERTAINLY IS A WISE PLAN BUT IT IS ALL THANKS TO LIU BIAO THAT I AM WHERE I AM TODAY. TAKING OVER MY SAVIOUR'S LANDS IS UNTHINKABLE FOR ME.

JINGZHOU'S LORD, LIU BIAO IS IN FAILING HEALTH THESE DAYS... SO IF MY LORD WERE TO TAKE CONTROL OF JINGZHOU AND UTILIZE ITS RICH RESOURCES, I AM CONFIDENT WE CAN SQUARELY FACE OFF AGAINST CAO CAO.

SACRIFICES MUST BE MADE IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE GREATER GOOD. IF MY LORD DOES NOT TAKE JINGZHOU NOW, YOU WILL COME TO REGRET IT FOR SURE.

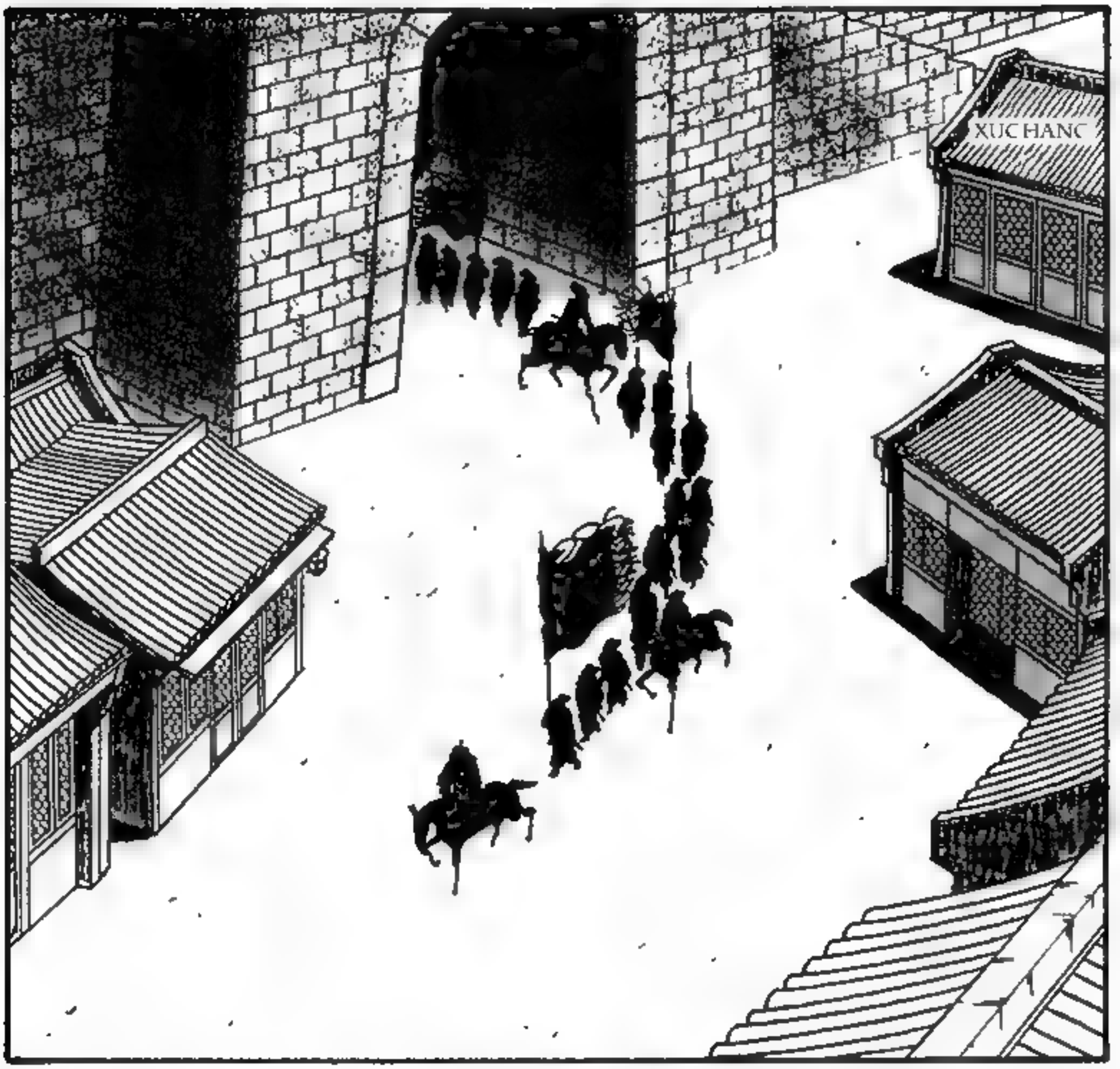
THEN WHAT WILL MY LORD DO WHEN CAO CAO COMES?

I'M AFRAID I CANNOT JUST THROW AWAY MY MORALS.

I WOULD MUCH RATHER PERISH AS A FOOL WITH MORALS THAN TO LIVE AS AN UNGRATEFUL BRUTE.

SO BE IT THEN...

LIU BIAO'S DEATH



AFTER ALL THAT BOASTING I DID, HOW COULD I JUST BRAZENLY GO MEET THE CHANCELLOR AS IF NOTHING HAPPENED?

PARDON?

COME HERE AND TIE ME UP.

YES.

IS THIS TIGHT ENOUGH, COMM-ANDER?

NOW TIE ME UP.

I DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO FACE SIR AFTER MY SHAMEFUL LOSS.

XIAHOU DUN, WHY DO YOU COME TIED UP?

I'VE ALREADY HEARD WHY YOU LOST.

PLEASE DO AS YOU WISH TO THIS FAILURE, MY LORD.

TO THINK THAT YOU, WHO STUDIED MILITARY STRATEGY FROM A YOUNG AGE AND FOUGHT COUNTLESS BATTLES, WOULD NOT EXPECT THE ENEMY TO USE FIRE WHEN THE ROADS ARE NARROW AND SURROUNDED BY DENSE FORESTS...

UNTIE HIS ROPE.

EVEN IF I WERE TO HAVE 10 MOUTHS, I CANNOT SAY A SINGLE WORD IN MY DEFENSE.

THANK YOU, MY LORD!

XIAHOU DUN, YOU ARE A TALENTED GENERAL. MAY YOU LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES SO YOU CAN RECLAIM YOUR HONOUR NEXT TIME.

PERHAPS NOW IS THE TIME TO BEGIN MY CONQUEST OF THE SOUTH.

I CANNOT LEAVE LIU BEI ALONE, HOWEVER.

LISTEN WELL, GENTLEMEN! WE SHALL HEREBY BEGIN OUR SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN, IN WHICH LIU BEI AND SUN QUAN ARE TO BE DESTROYED AT LAST!

2ND DIVISION:
ZHANG LIAO, ZHANG HE

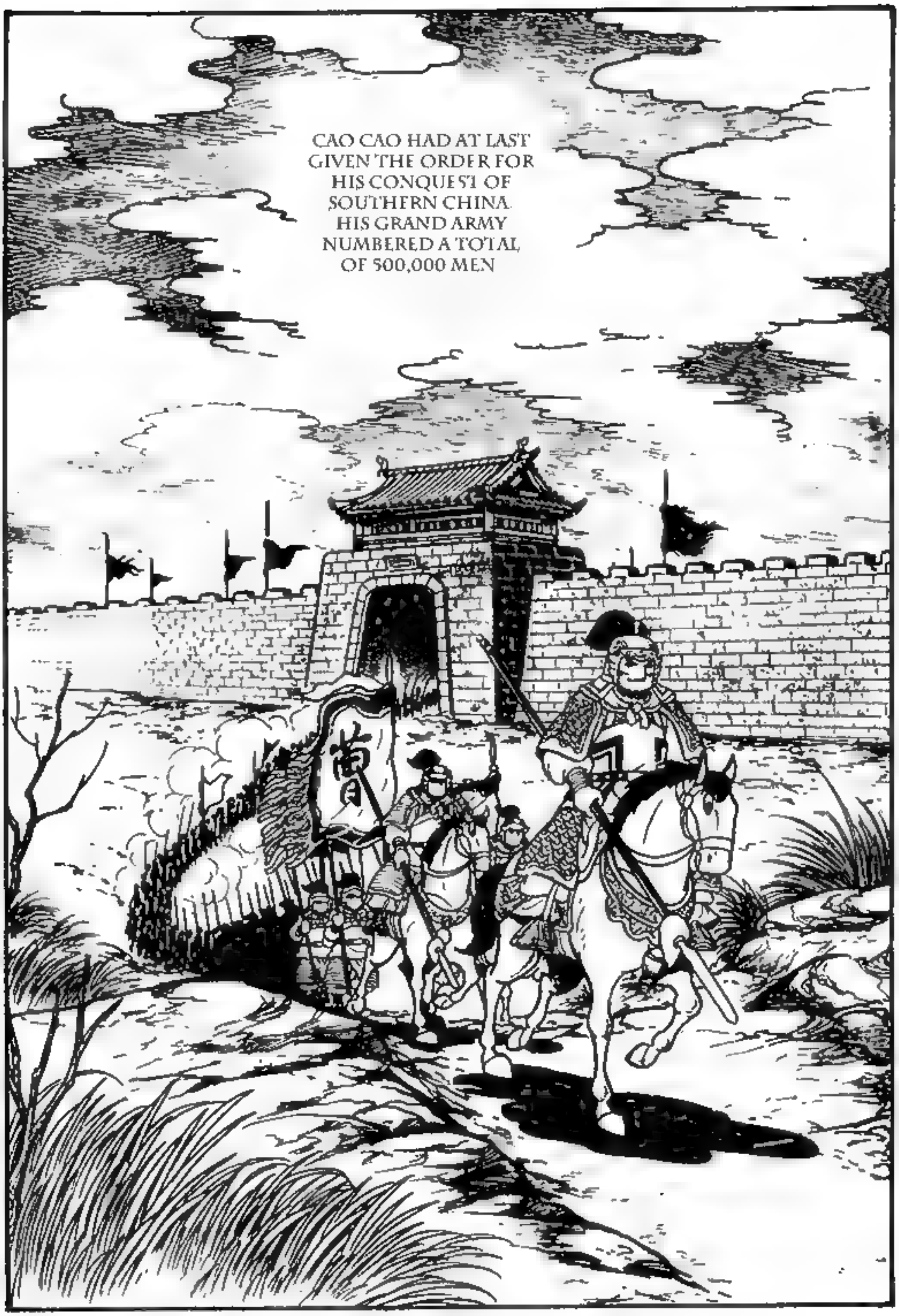
3RD DIVISION:
XIAHOU DUN, XIAHOU YUAN

4TH DIVISION:
YU JIN, LI DIAN

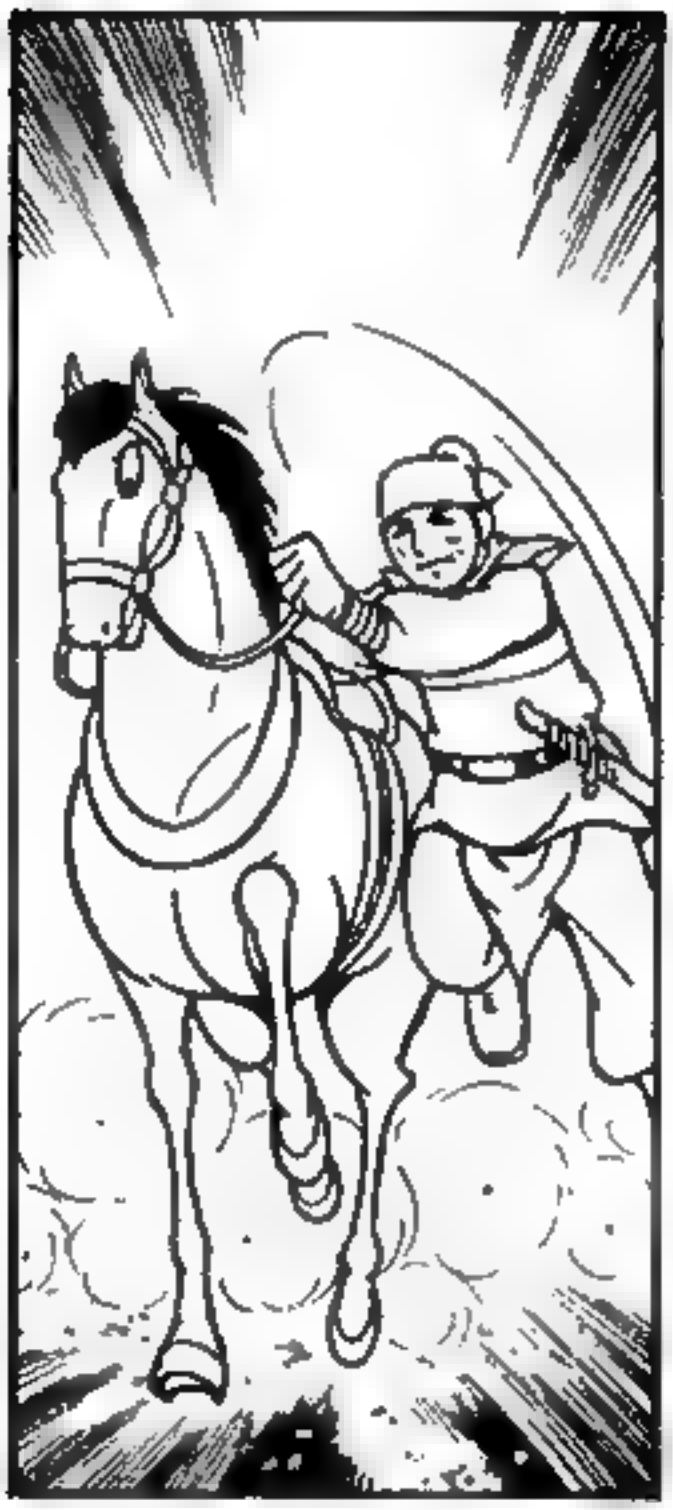
I SHALL PERSONALLY LEAD THE 5TH DIVISION MYSELF.

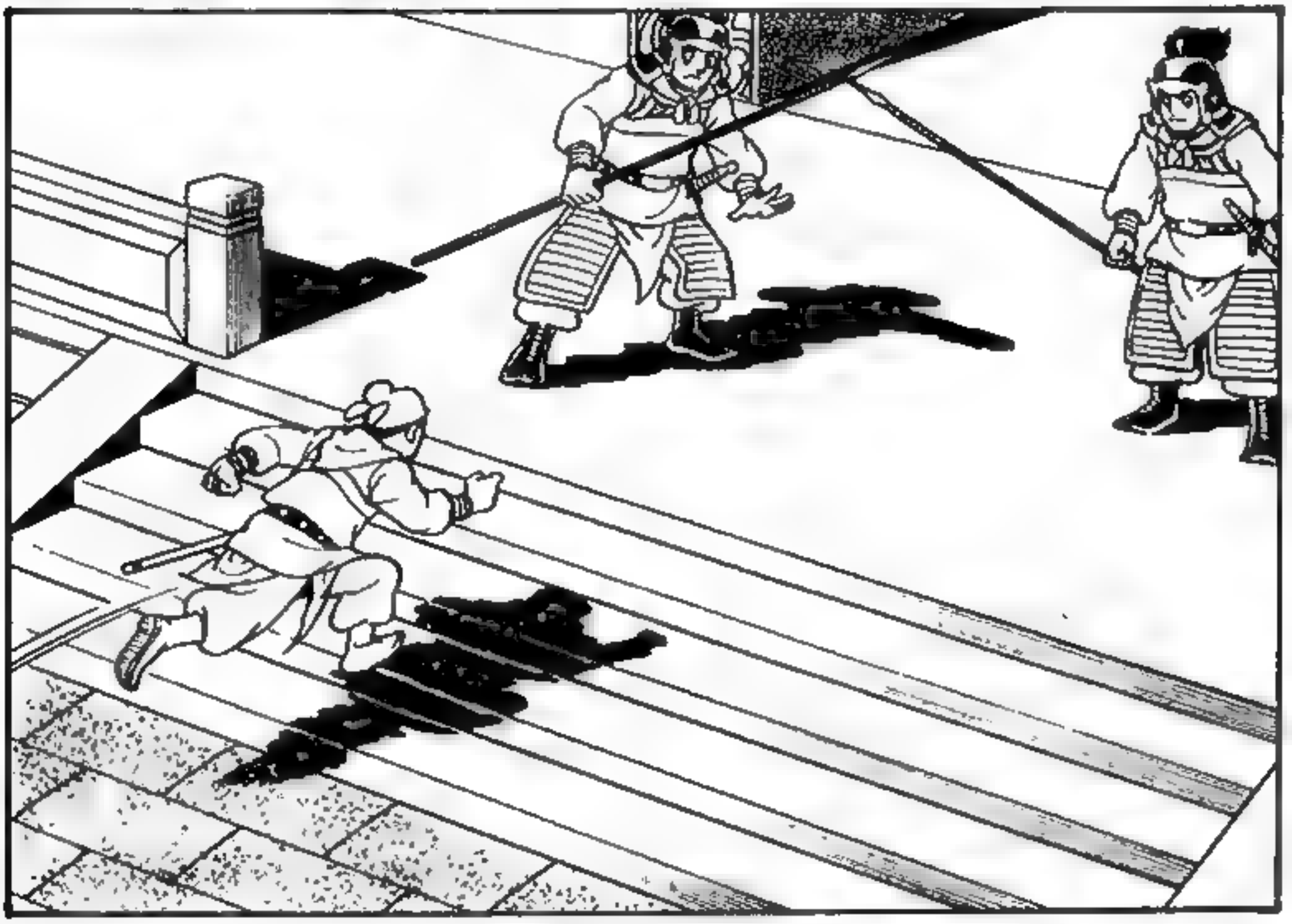
OUR FORCES SHALL BE DIVIDED UP INTO 5 DIVISIONS, WITH EACH NUMBERING 100,000 MEN AND LED BY 2 GENERALS. THE LEADERS ARE...

1ST DIVISION:
CAO REN, CAO HONG


CAO CAO HAD AT LAST
GIVEN THE ORDER FOR
HIS CONQUEST OF
SOUTHERN CHINA.
HIS GRAND ARMY
NUMBERED A TOTAL
OF 500,000 MEN

*SIGN READS XINYE





I BRING AN URGENT MESSAGE FOR MY LORD FROM THE CAPITAL. LET ME IN IMMEDIATELY.

HALT, IDENTIFY YOURSELF!

WHAT!

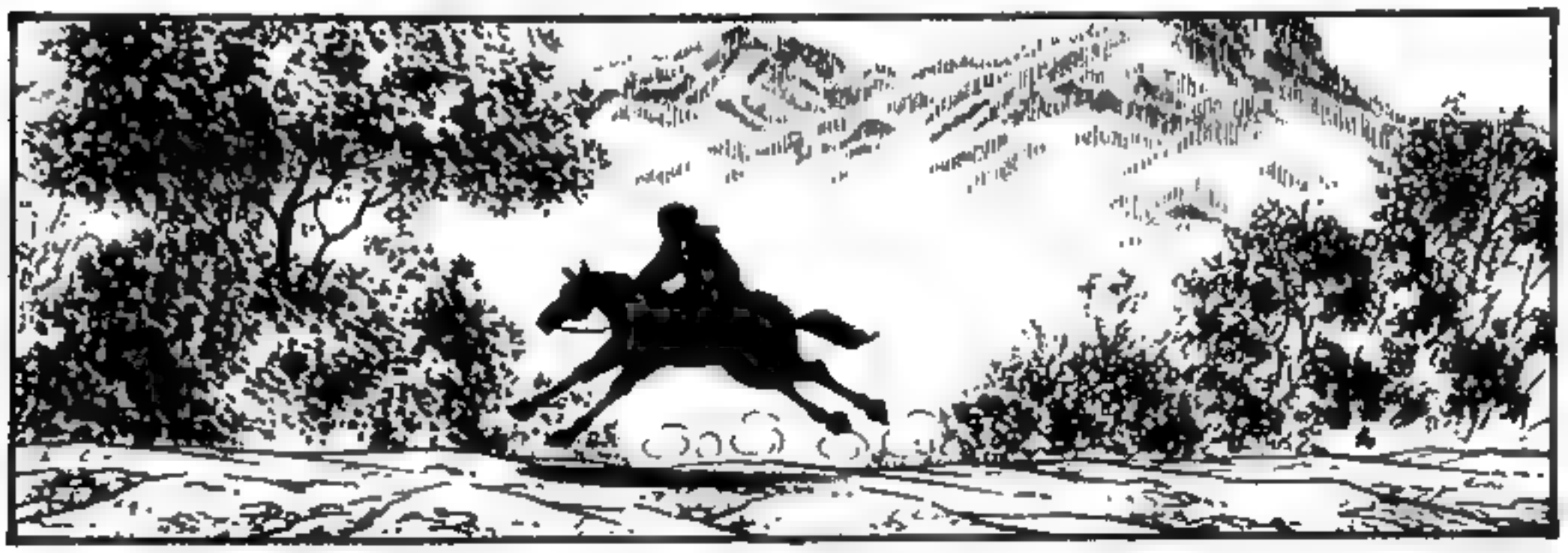
I'M AFRAID LORD LIU BEI IS NOT HERE IN XINYE AT THE MOMENT.

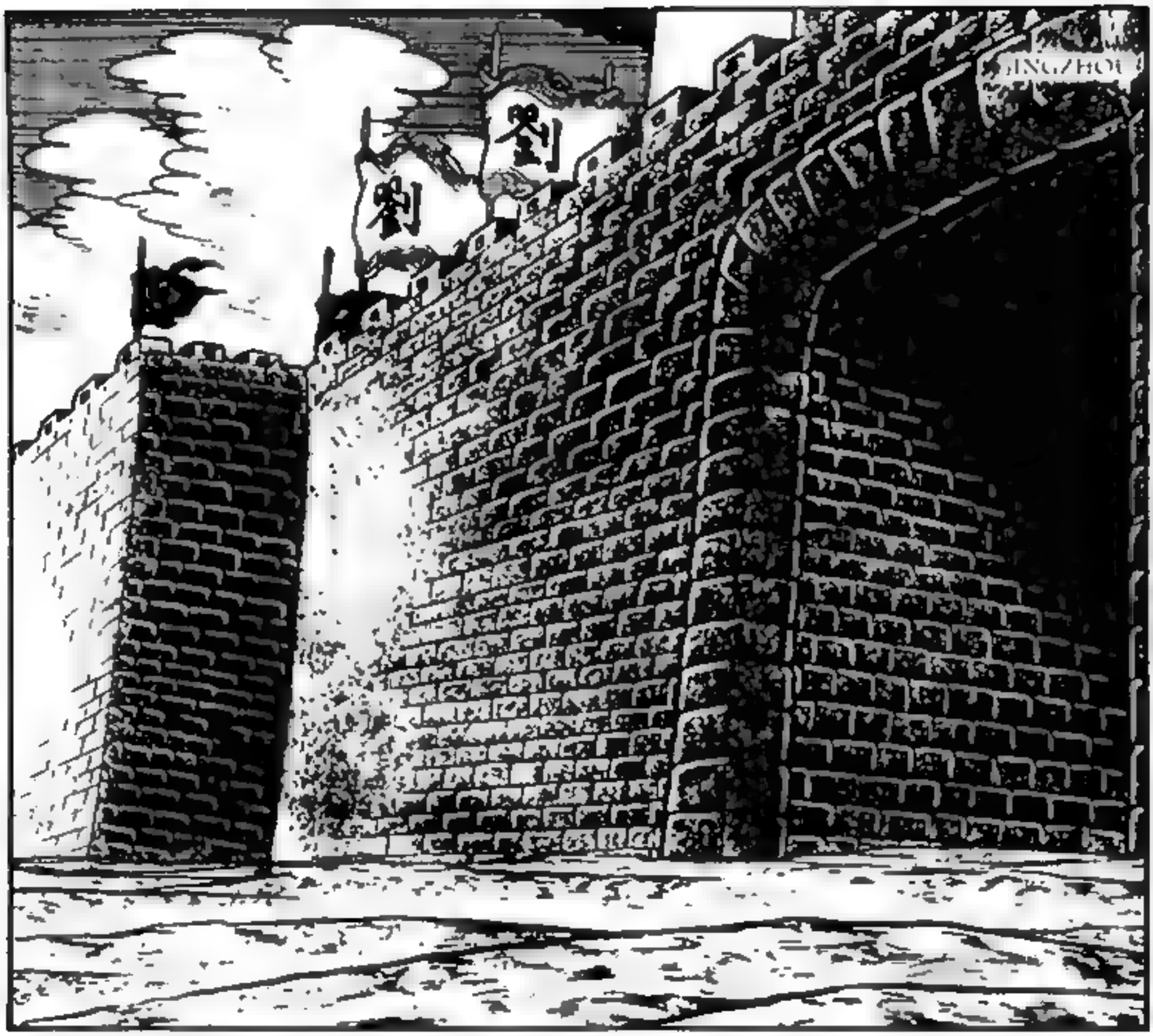
JING-ZHOU?

HE RECEIVED WORD THAT LIU BIAO HAD GROWN MORE ILL AND THUS LEFT FOR JINGZHOU.

W-WHERE IS HE THEN!?

EXCUSE ME THEN.

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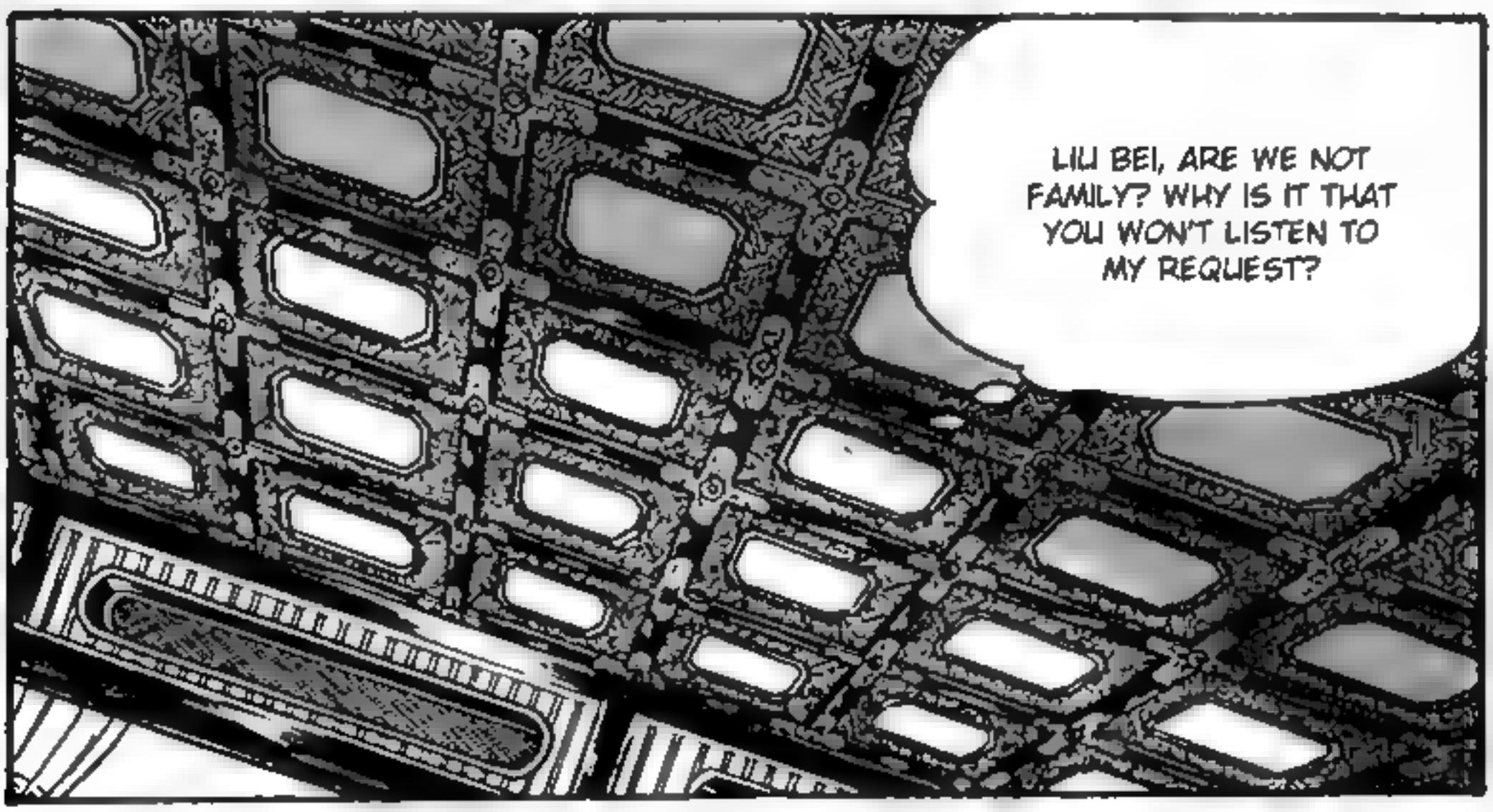
劉
JINGZHOU


LIU BEI, ARE WE NOT FAMILY? WHY IS IT THAT YOU WON'T LISTEN TO MY REQUEST?

I KNOW MY BODY BEST. IT SHAN'T LAST FOR MUCH LONGER.

THE PEOPLE WOULD THINK THAT I FORCEFULLY TOOK OVER JINGZHOU IF I WERE TO SUCCEED AFTER YOU.

BUT YOU ALREADY HAVE TWO SONS, DO YOU NOT?

AND SO I'D AT LEAST LIKE TO GO TO THE AFTERWORLD WITH NO WORRIES.

I'D BE HAPPY TO ASSIST YOUR SONS BUT TAKING OVER AS GOVERNOR ENTIRELY IS RATHER...

THEN I'M SURE NOBODY WOULD BE ABLE TO COMPLAIN.

IF THAT'S YOUR CONCERN, I'LL WRITE A WILL.

LIU QI'S HEALTH IS FRAIL AND LIU CONG IS MUCH TOO YOUNG. IF ONLY YOU COULD BECOME JINGZHOU'S NEXT GOVERNOR, I'M SURE EVEN MY SONS WOULD BE RELIEVED.

NOT EVEN WHEN I PLEAD YOU LIKE SO?

WHAT'S ALL THIS RUCKUS I HEAR?

?

?

SILENCE! DO YOU NOT REALIZE JINGZHOU'S LORD IS GRAVELY ILL!?

I'M NO ONE SUSPICIOUS SO PLEASE, LET ME IN!

URGENT NEWS?

I BRING URGENT NEWS FOR LORD LIU BEI FROM THE CAPITAL. PLEASE, IT'S AN EMERGENCY!

THANK YOU.

FINE, COME THIS WAY.

WHAT IS IT?

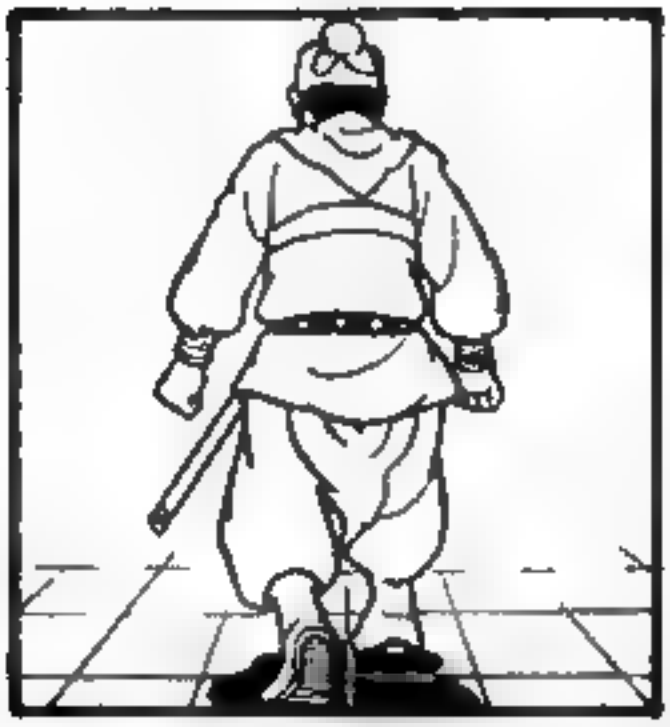
CAO CAO HAS FINALLY LAUNCHED HIS CAMPAIGN TO CONQUER THE SOUTH!

SIR, THIS MAN BRINGS YOU URGENT NEWS FROM THE CAPITAL.

WHAT!?

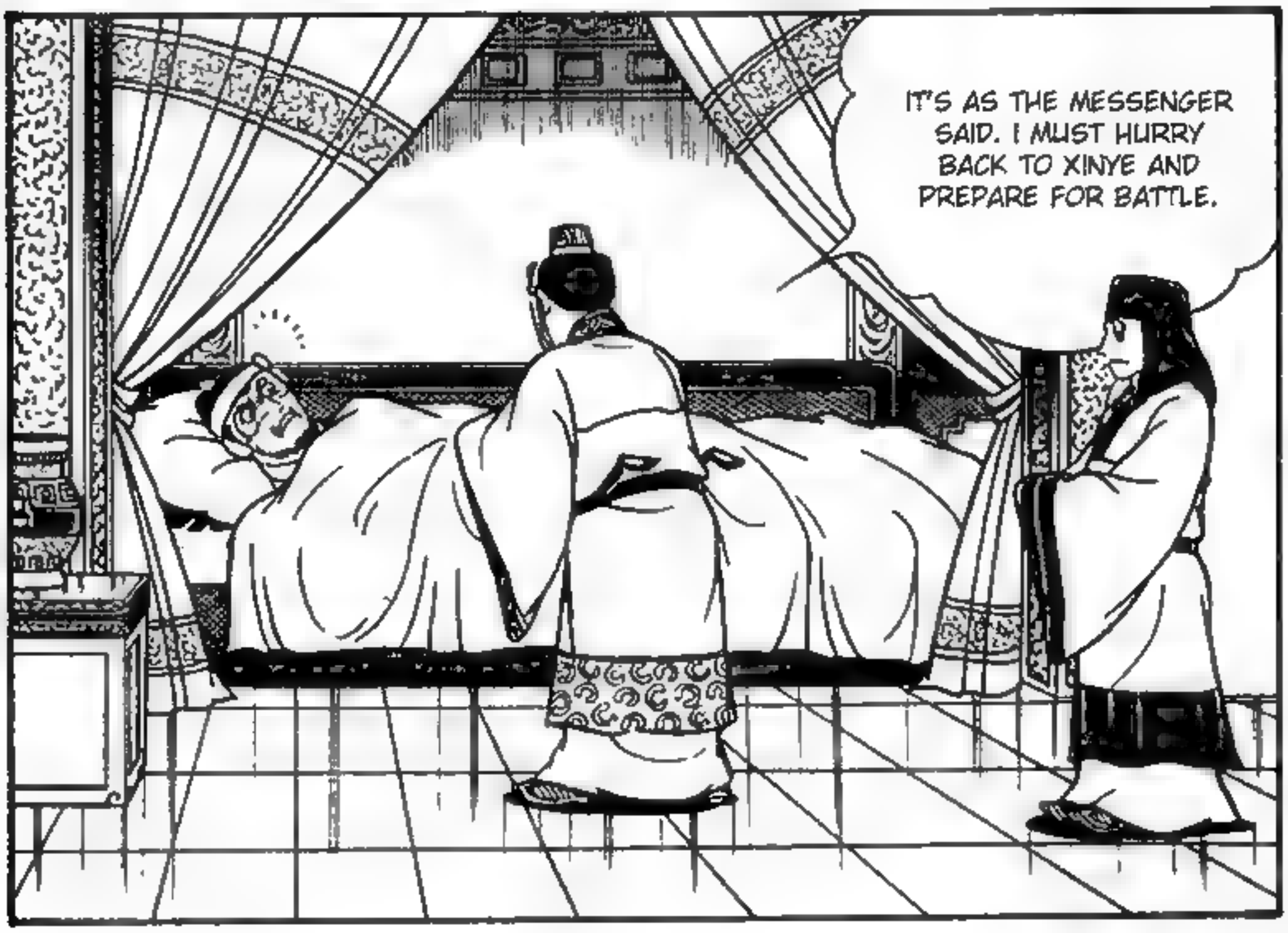
500,000!?

HIS ARMY NUMBERS A TOTAL OF 500,000.



SO IT'S FINALLY HAPP-ENED, HAS IT?

YES, SIR.
THANK YOU FOR LETTING ME KNOW. YOU MAY RETIRE FOR THE DAY AND GET SOME REST.


IT'S AS THE MESSENGER SAID. I MUST HURRY BACK TO XINYE AND PREPARE FOR BATTLE.

IF CAO CAO HAS FINALLY DECIDED TO ATTACK, THEN THAT'S ALL THE MORE REASON FOR ME TO WORRY.

W-WAIT.

I SHALL WRITE UP THE WILL RIGHT NOW.

I SHALL RESPECT YOUR WISHES AND PLACE LIU QI AS THE NEXT LORD OF JINGZHOU. SO PLEASE, BE HIS GUARDIAN AND HELP KEEP JINGZHOU SAFE.

HAND ME A BRUSH AND PAPER.

WHAT!? LIU QI IS SET TO BE THE NEXT LORD WHILE LIU BEI IS TO BE HIS GUARDIAN?

YES, BROTHER. MY HUSBAND IS WRITING THE WILL AS WE SPEAK!

DAMN IT, I'VE GOT TO COME UP WITH A PLAN OF SOME SORT....

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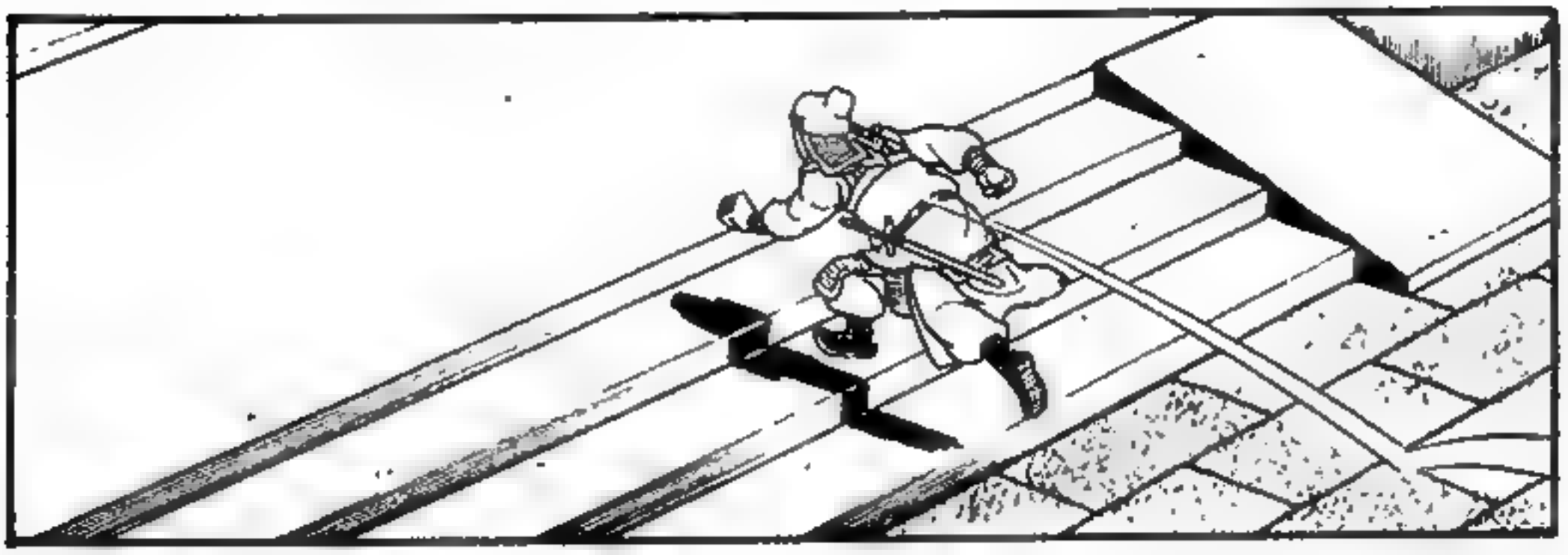
IT'S
LIU QI!



WHAT IS IT?

GENERAL CAI MAO!

WHAT!?

LIU QI IS APPROACHING THE CASTLE RIGHT NOW.

WE CAN'T LET HIM REALIZE THAT HE HAS BEEN APPOINTED AS THE NEXT LORD.

WHAT DO WE DO?

CLOSE THE GATES!

JUST LEAVE IT TO ME.

CHASE HIM AWAY, OF COURSE.

WHAT'RE YOU GOING TO DO?

HM?
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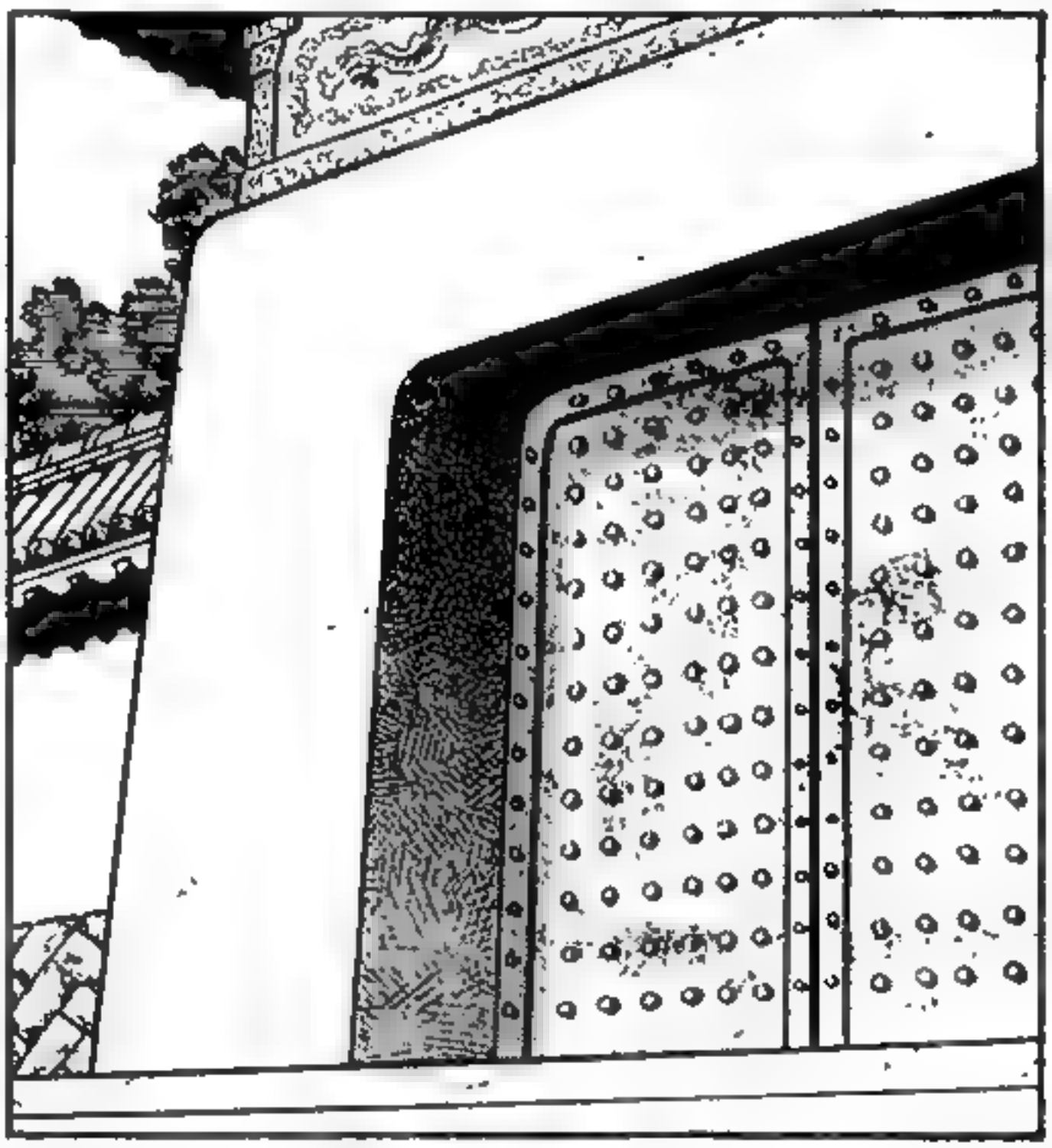
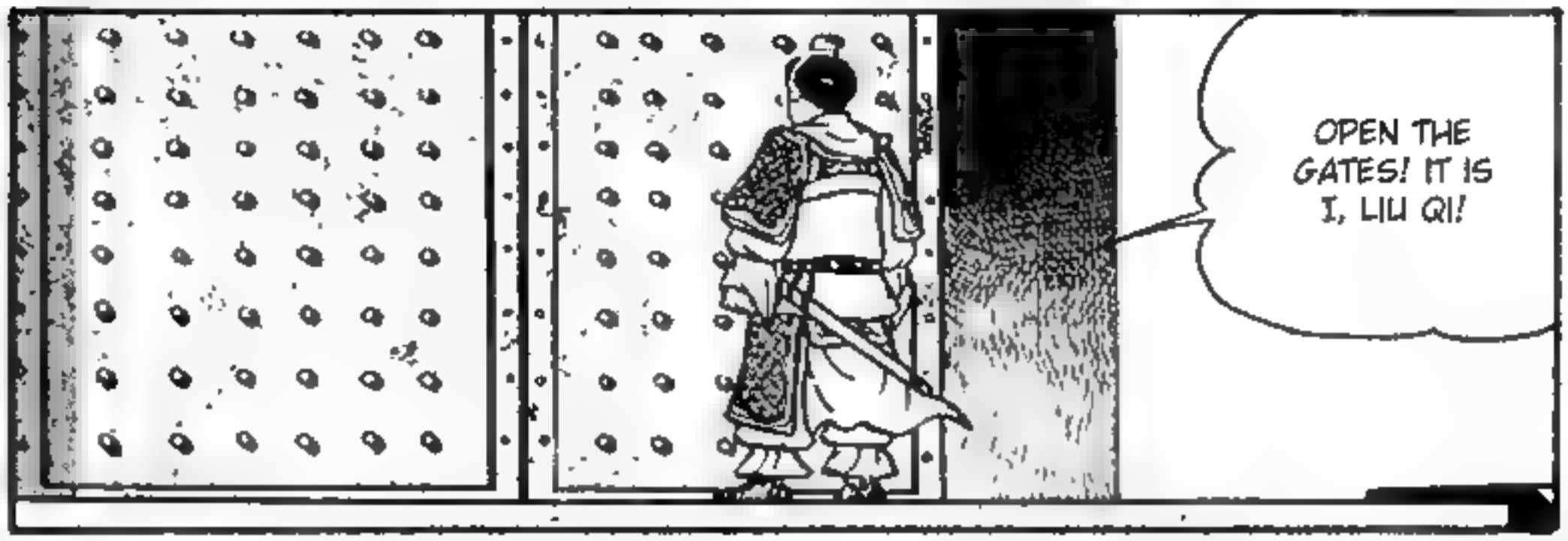
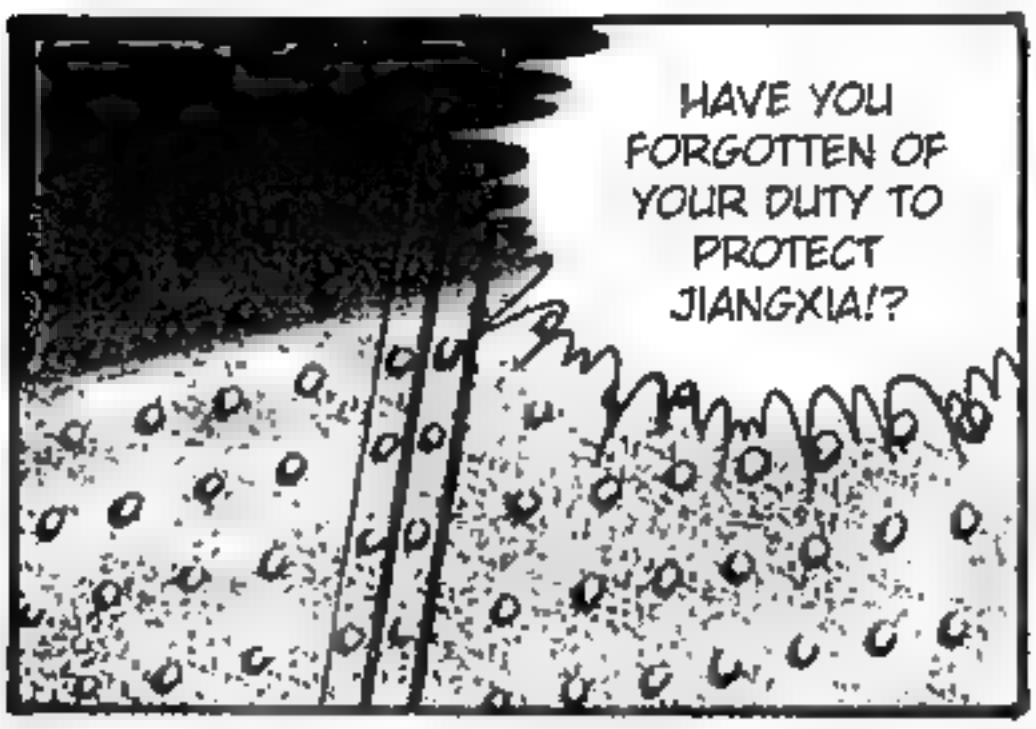



OPEN THE GATES! IT IS I, LIU QI!

LIU QI? WHY ARE YOU HERE?

DID YOU NOT HEAR ME? OPEN THE GATES FOR LIU QI HAS COME!


HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN OF YOUR DUTY TO PROTECT JIANGXIA!?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN WHY...? I'VE COME TO SEE MY SICK FATHER, OF COURSE!

YOUR FATHER HAS GIVEN YOU THE ORDER TO GUARD JIANGXIA SO THAT JINGZHOU MAY MAINTAIN ITS PEACE IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES. HOW DARE YOU DISOBEY HIM BY ABANDONING YOUR POST! RETURN AT ONCE!

BUT I ONLY DID SO BECAUSE I HEARD MY FATHER WAS GRAVELY ILL. SO PLEASE, LET ME SEE HIM EVEN FOR A MINUTE.

AS YOU SAY, I REALIZE THAT IT WAS UNWISE OF ME TO SUDDENLY LEAVE JIANGXIA.

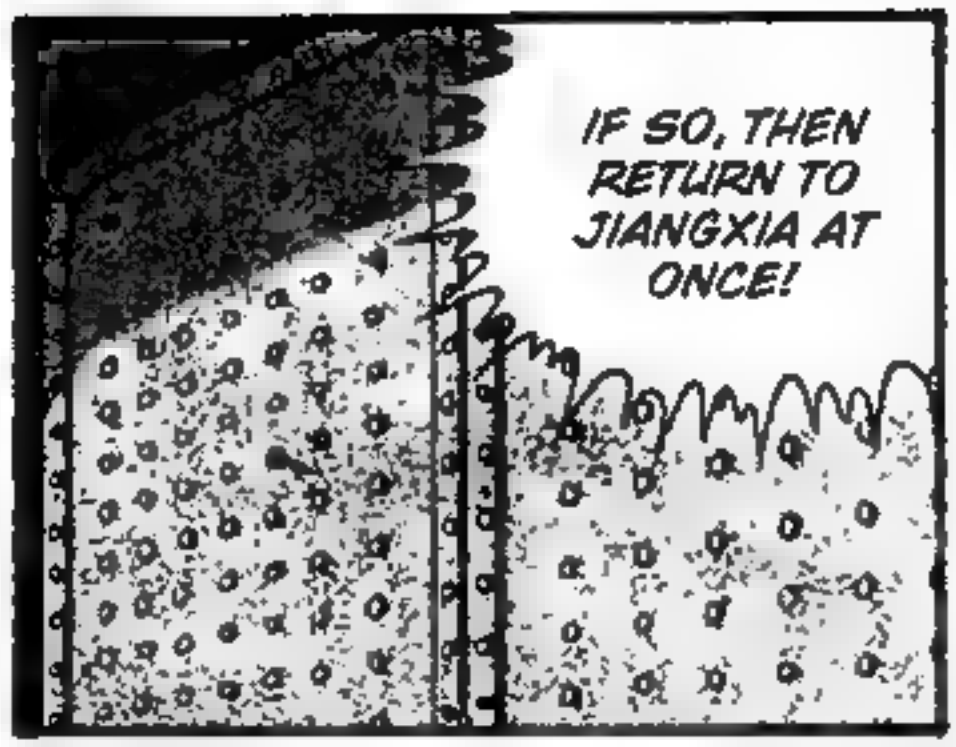
UNCLE CAI MAO, IS THAT YOU?

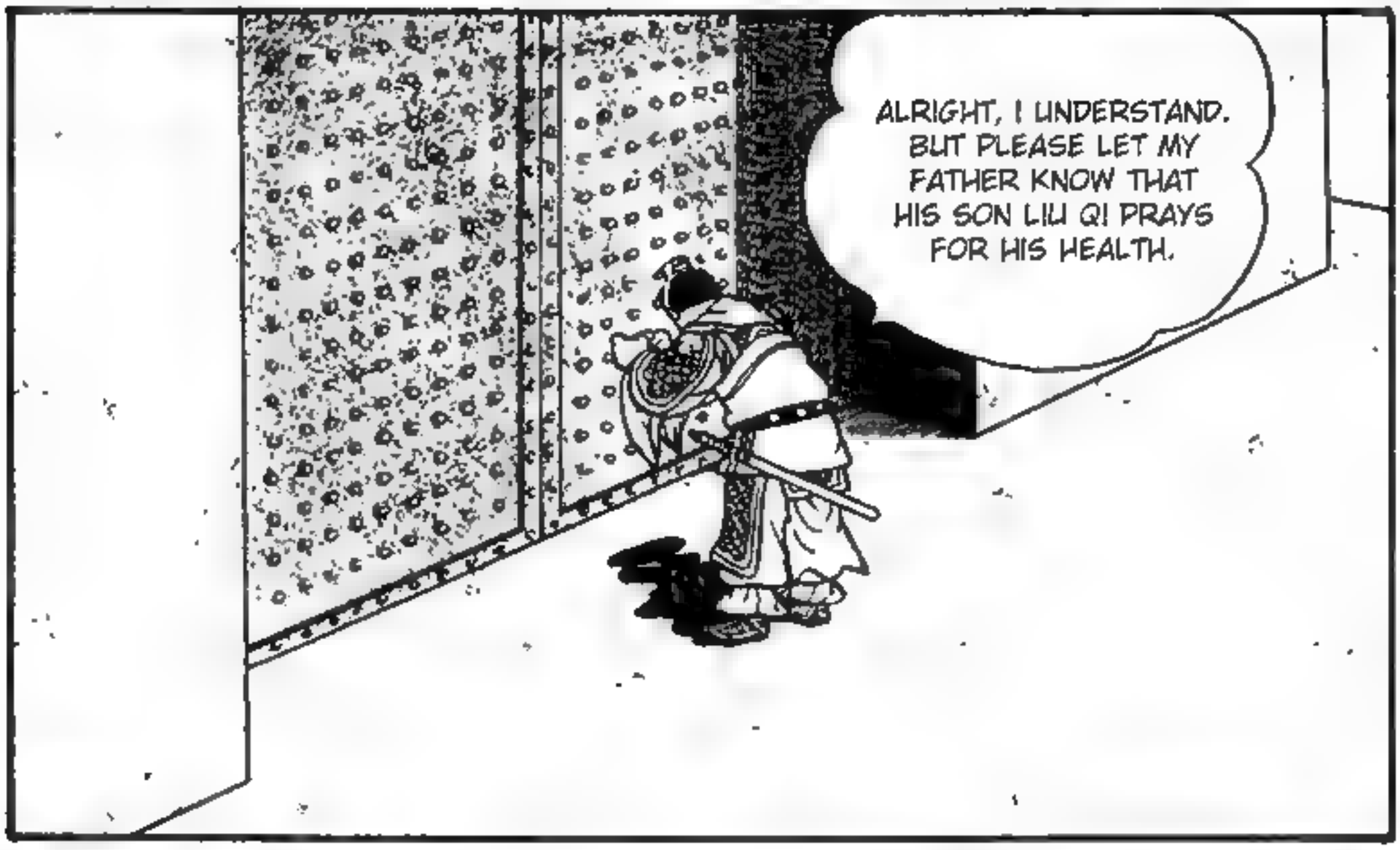
BUT...

IF I WERE TO LET YOUR FATHER SEE YOU, HE WOULD ONLY BE ANGERED AT HOW YOU'VE DISOBEYED HIS ORDERS TO PROTECT JIANGXIA. YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO WORSEN HIS CONDITION RIGHT NOW BY UPSETTING HIM, DO YOU?

N-NO...

THE ANSWER IS STILL A NO! DO YOU REALLY WISH TO SHOW YOUR FATHER WHAT AN UNFILIAL SON YOU ARE!?


IF SO, THEN RETURN TO JIANGXIA AT ONCE!


ALRIGHT, I UNDERSTAND. BUT PLEASE LET MY FATHER KNOW THAT HIS SON LIU QI PRAYS FOR HIS HEALTH.

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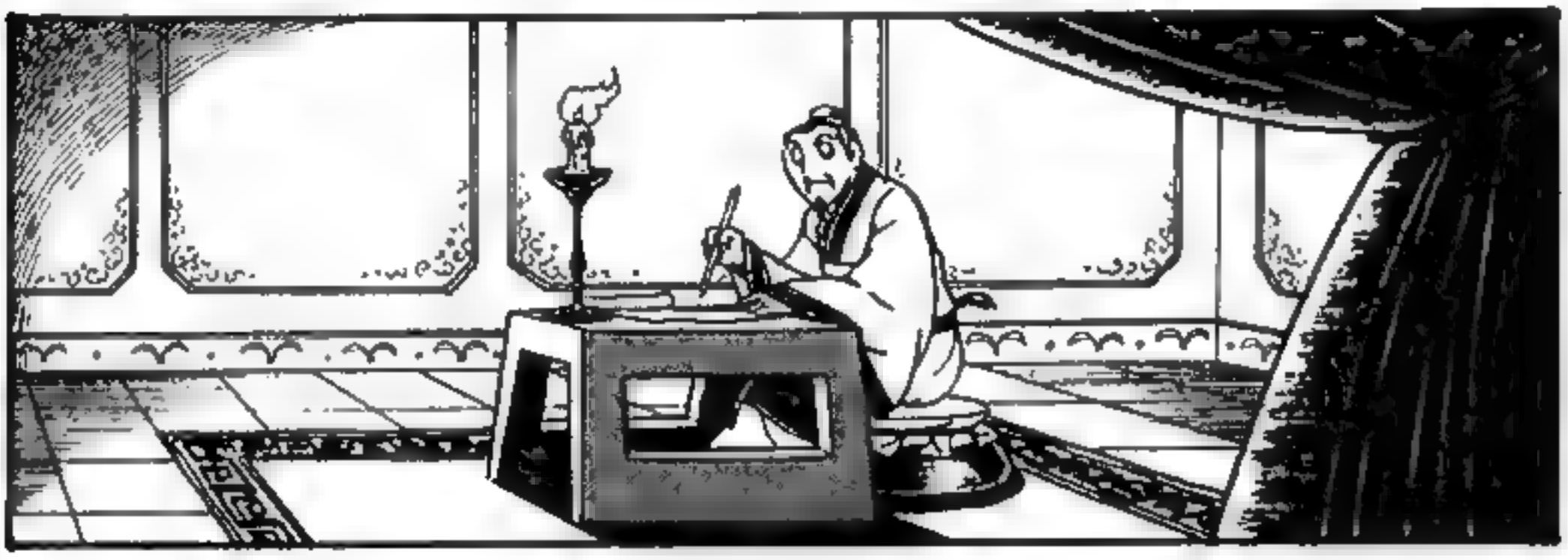
SHORTLY AFTER,

LIU BIAO
PASSED AWAY



YES, HERE IT IS.

HAS THE WILL BEEN PREPARED?

WELL DONE. I SHALL AWARD YOU WITHIN DUE TIME.

IT'S AN EXACT COPY OF HIS HANDWRITING.

WHAT DO YOU THINK, SIR?

THANK YOU, SIR.

NOW ALL I HAVE TO DO IS USE THIS TO MAKE LIU CONG THE NEXT LORD OF JINGZHOU.

YOU STATESMEN SHOULD ALREADY KNOW WHY I HAVE CALLED FOR A MEETING TODAY.

JINGZHOU CURRENTLY FACES A CRISIS SO WE MUST HASTEN TO NAME OUR NEXT LORD.

THIS IS HIS WILL.

FORTUNATELY FOR US, LORD LIU BIAO HAS MADE A WILL BEFORE HE PASSED AWAY.

IT SAYS HERE THAT THE ELDEST SON LIU QI IS NOT FIT TO RULE DUE TO HIS FRAIL HEALTH. AND SO, LIU CONG WILL BE THE NEXT LORD OF JINGZHOU.

WHAT!?

THAT SEEMS QUITE STRANGE.

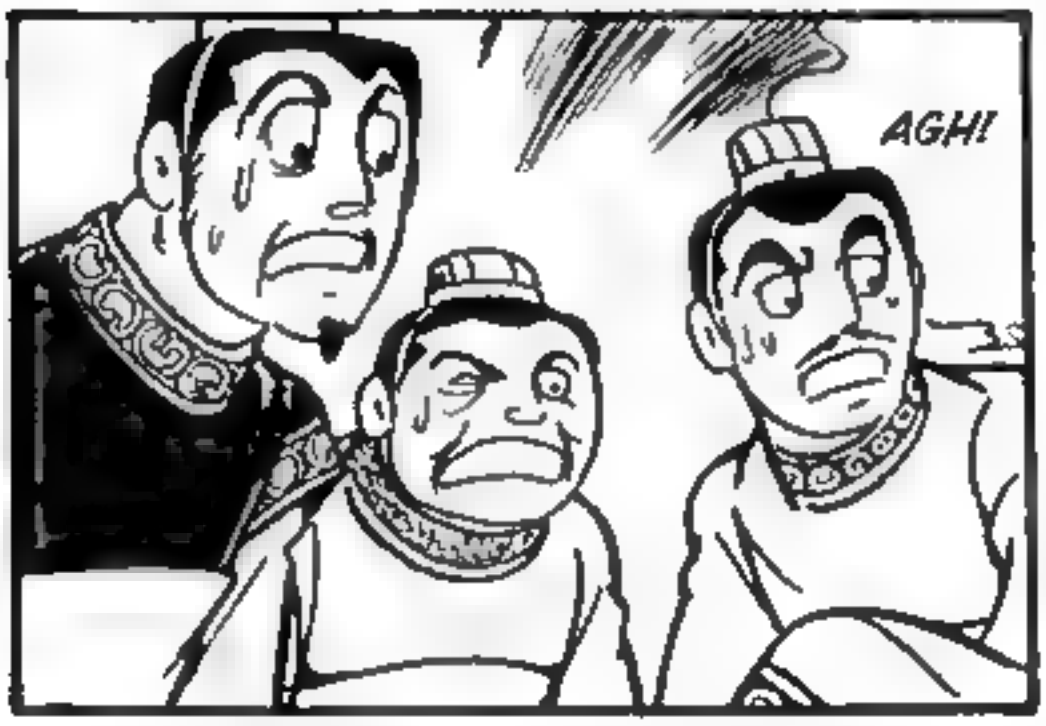
SILENCE! THIS IS WHAT OUR LORD WISHED!

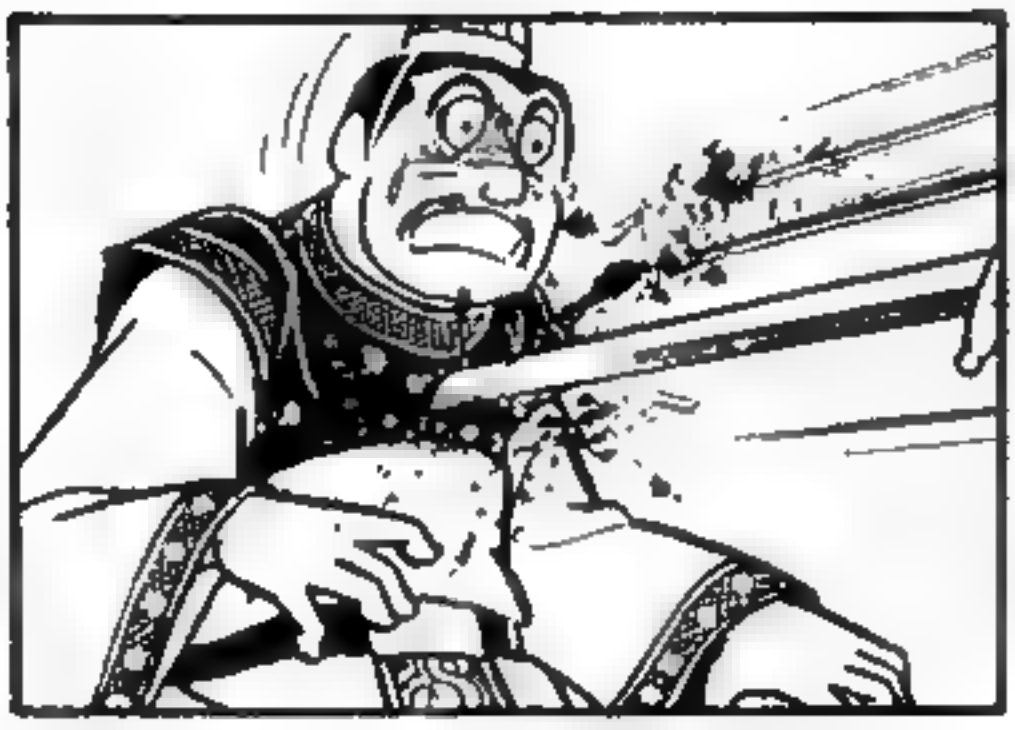
JUST AS THERE ARE RANKS AMONG SERVANTS, THERE IS ORDER AMONG BROTHERS. IT IS ONLY RIGHT FOR LIU QI TO SUCCEED FOR HE IS THE OLDER SON.

NGHHHH! YOU DARE DISRESPECT OUR LATE-LORD'S WISHES!?

IF THAT IS REALLY HIS WILL, WHICH I DOUBT, YOU MUST READ IT IN FRONT OF LIU QI AND LIU BEI AS WELL.

I, CAI MAO, SHAN'T FORGIVE SUCH INSO-LENCE!


AGH!



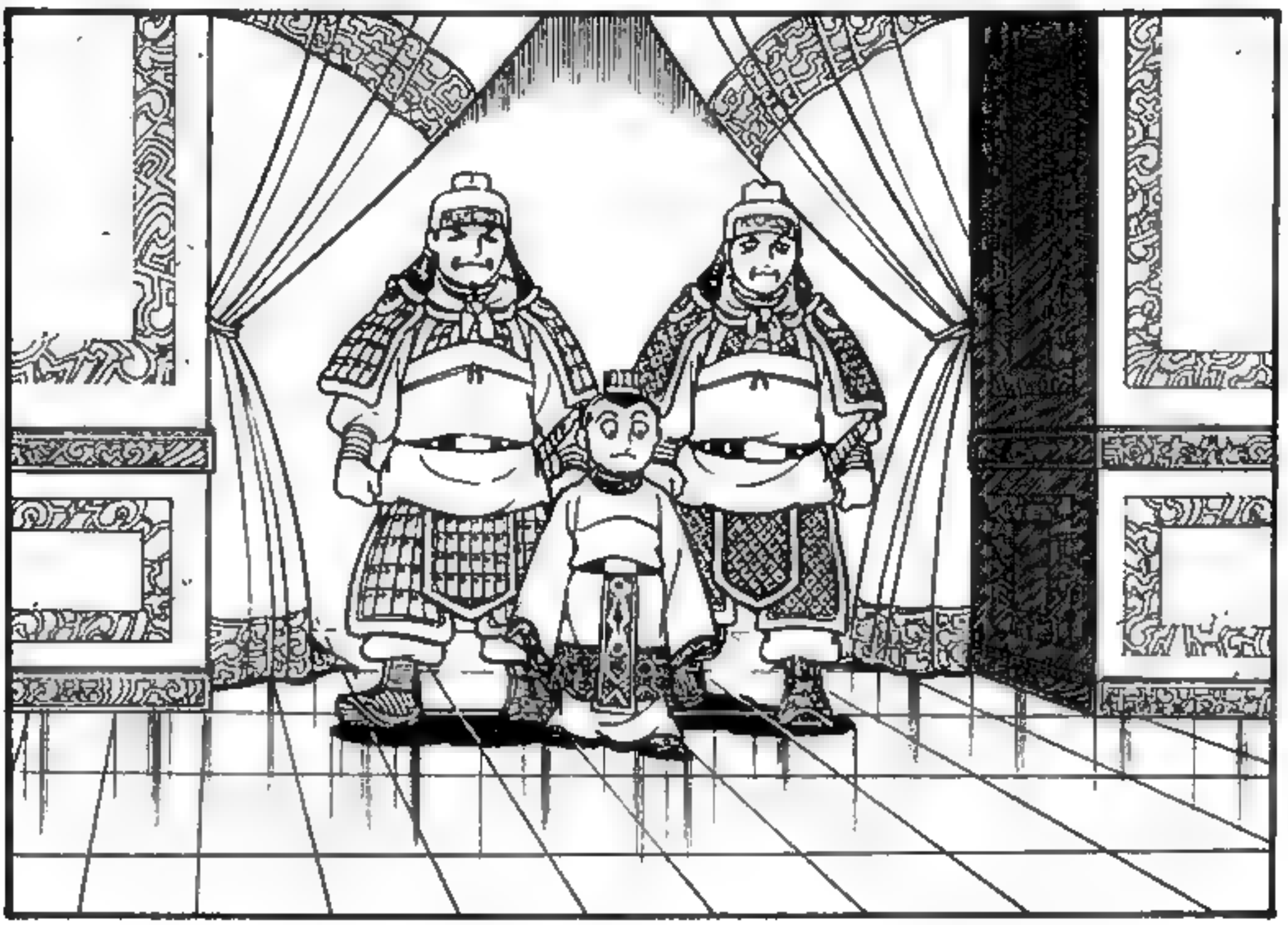
ANY OTHERS WHO WISH TO OBJECT!?

TAKE THIS DISGUSTING CORPSE OUTSIDE!

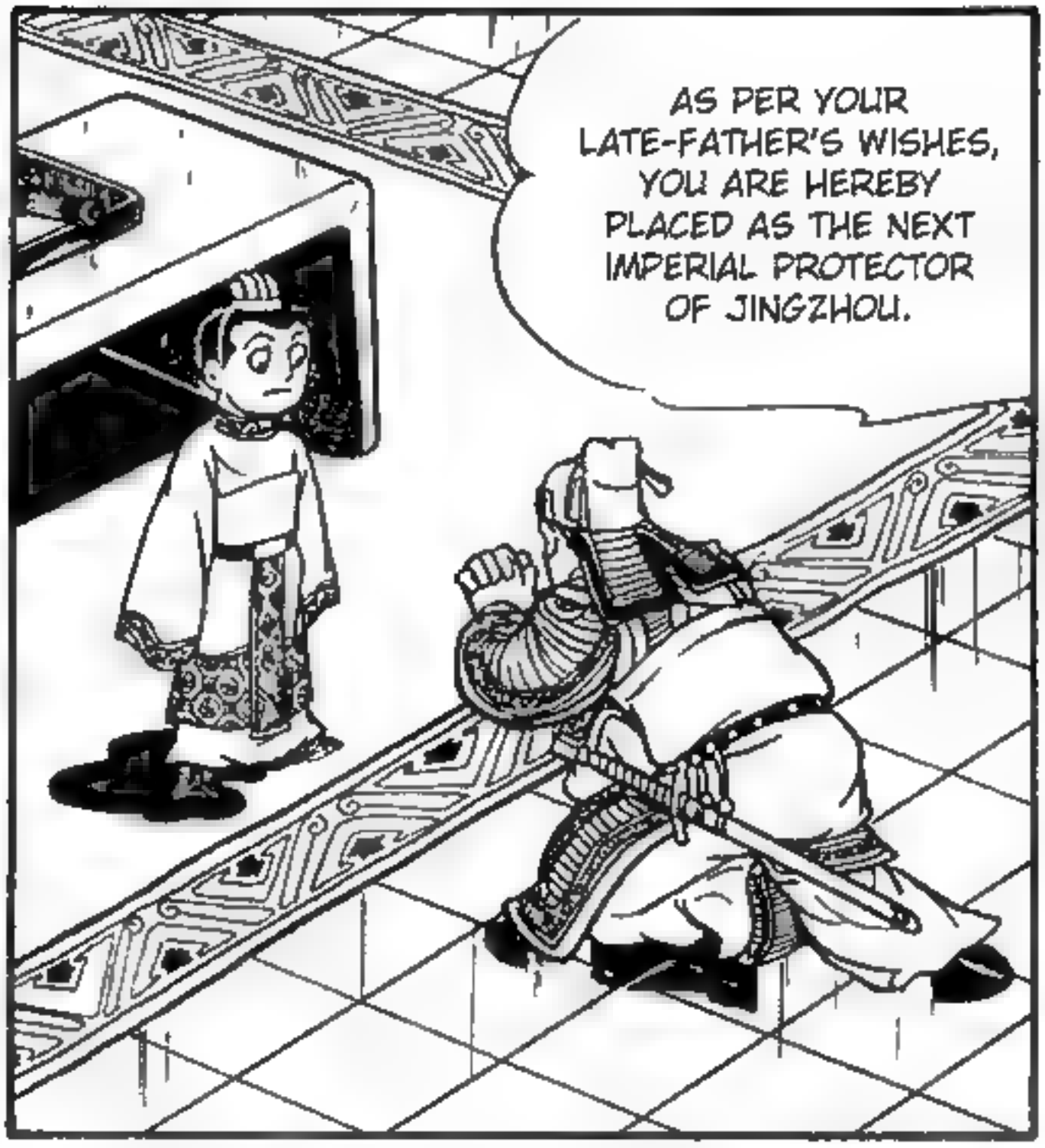
I SHALL TAKE THAT SILENCE AS A NO.

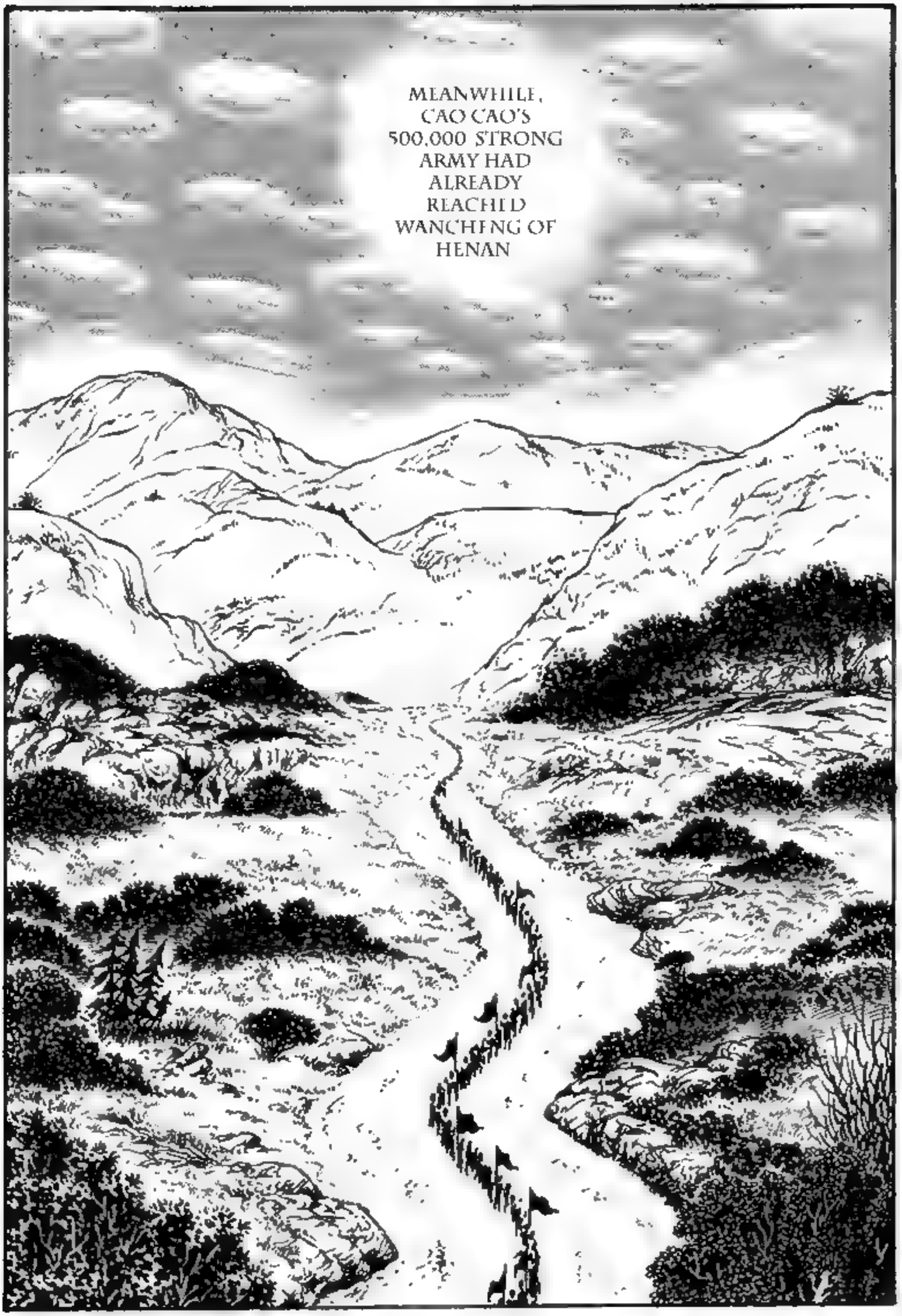
BRING LIU CONG THIS WAY.

NOW LET US WELCOME OUR NEW LORD.

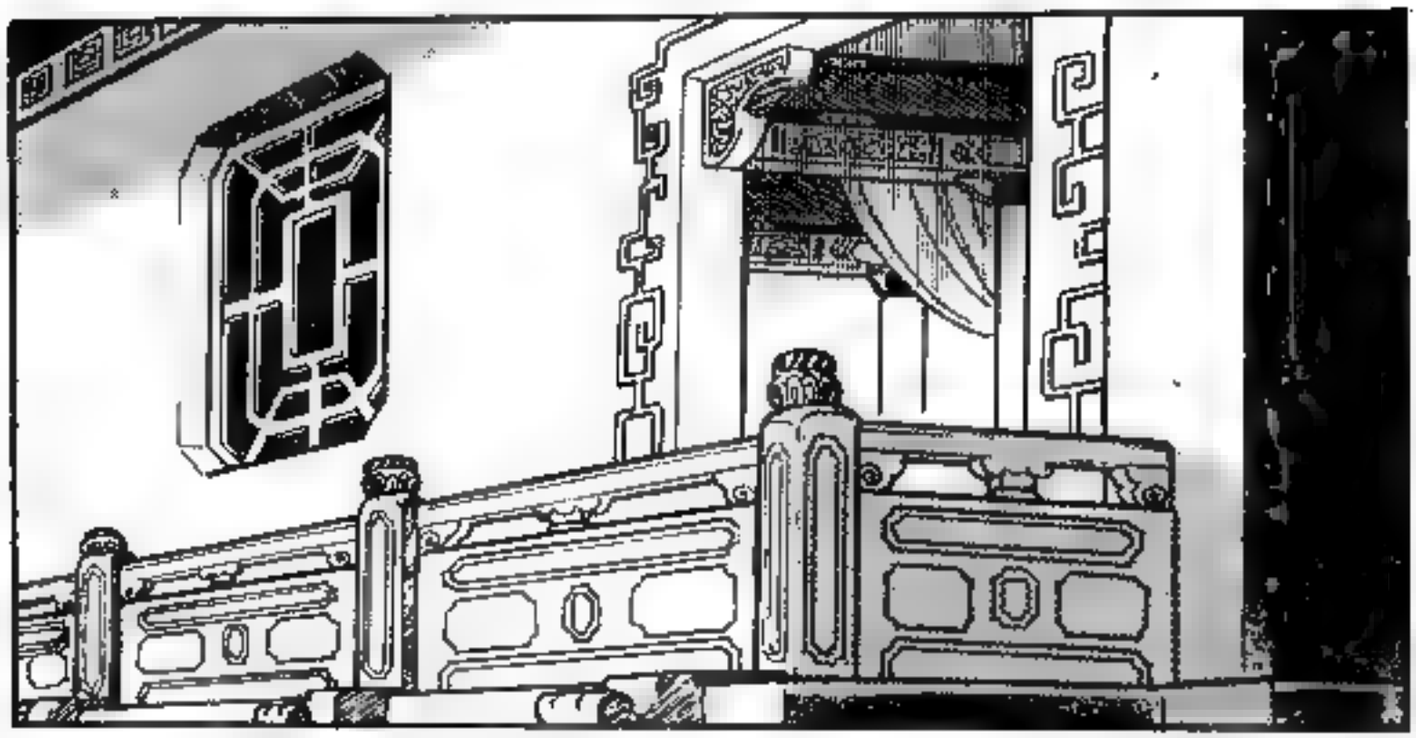


GENTLEMEN, SWEAR YOUR LOYALTY TO YOUR NEW LORD!


AS PER YOUR LATE-FATHER'S WISHES, YOU ARE HEREBY PLACED AS THE NEXT IMPERIAL PROTECTOR OF JINGZHOU.


MEANWHILE,
CAO CAO'S
500,000 STRONG
ARMY HAD
ALREADY
REACHED
WANCHENG OF
HENAN

SURRENDER



PLEASE VOICE YOUR OPINIONS.

NOW IS THE TIME TO DECIDE WHETHER WE SHOULD FIGHT OR SEEK PEACE.

GENTLEMEN, OUR REPORTS STATE THAT CAO CAO'S ARMY HAS ALREADY REACHED WANCHENG.

3 REASONS?

THERE ARE 3 REASONS WHY WE SHOULD NOT FIGHT.

CONSIDERING OUR SITUATION, WAR IS INEVITABLE. I PROPOSE THAT WE FIGHT.

I DISAGREE.

ONE: IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT LIU QI, DISSATISFIED WITH THE FACT THAT HIS YOUNGER BROTHER IS THE NEW LORD OF JINGZHOU, MIGHT ATTACK US.

AND THREE: THERE ARE STILL MANY AFFAIRS OF STATE TO SETTLE IN LIGHT OF OUR NEW LORD. WE ARE NOWHERE NEAR PREPARED TO WAGE A WAR.

TWO: LIU BEI MIGHT ALSO JOIN HANDS WITH LIU QI AND TURN AGAINST OUR ARMY.

FIRSTLY, CAO CAO HAS THE AUTHORITY OF THE IMPERIAL COURT BEHIND HIM. THUS, OPPOSING HIM WOULD BRAND US AS REBELS.

I AM ALSO OPPOSED TO THE WAR FOR 3 REASONS.

THIRDLY, AS IT HAS BEEN ALREADY POINTED OUT, IF WE ARE TO FIGHT CAO CAO, OUR SUPPOSED ALLIES LIU QI AND LIU BEI MIGHT TURN AGAINST US.

SECONDLY, CAO CAO'S FORCES HAVE WON VICTORY AFTER VICTORY AND ARE BATTLE-HARDENED VETERANS. COMPARED TO THEM, OUR FORCES HAVE LITTLE BATTLE EXPERIENCE.

YES, OUR STATE IS CERTAINLY IN NO SHAPE TO WAGE A MAJOR WAR RIGHT NOW.

HMM...

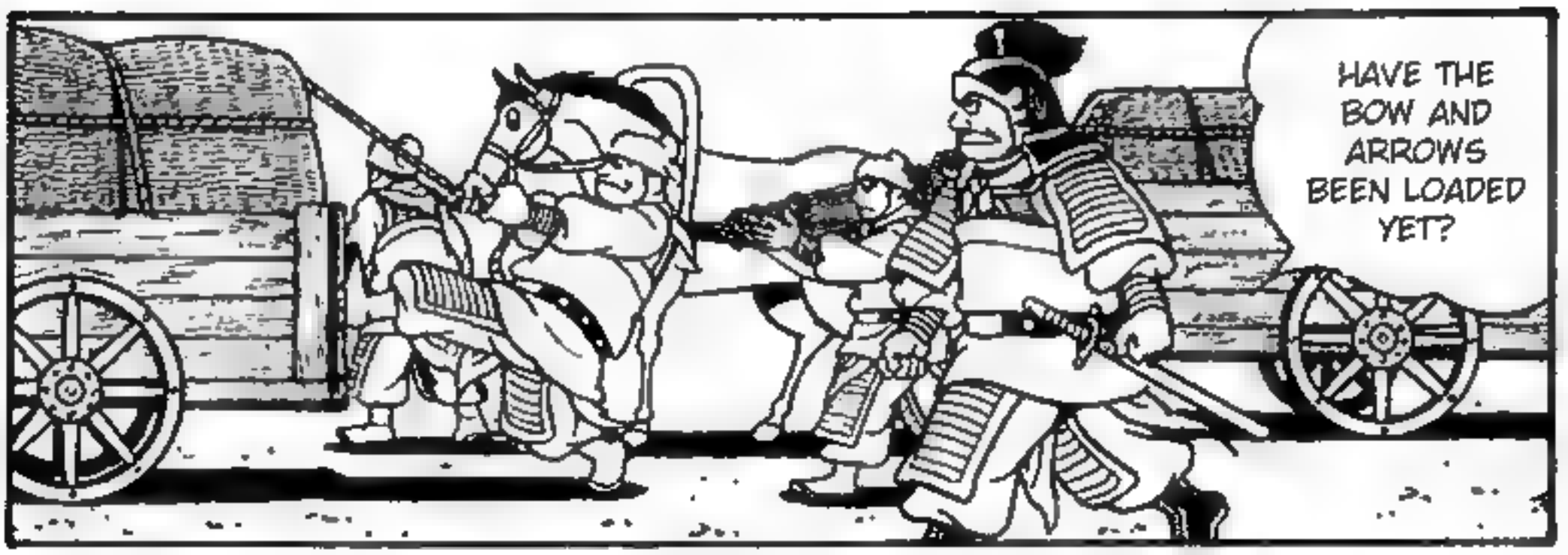
ALRIGHT, DO AS THEY RECOMMEND.

IT IS AS YOUR LOYAL SUBJECTS SAY, MY LORD. SEEKING PEACE IS OUR ONLY OPTION.

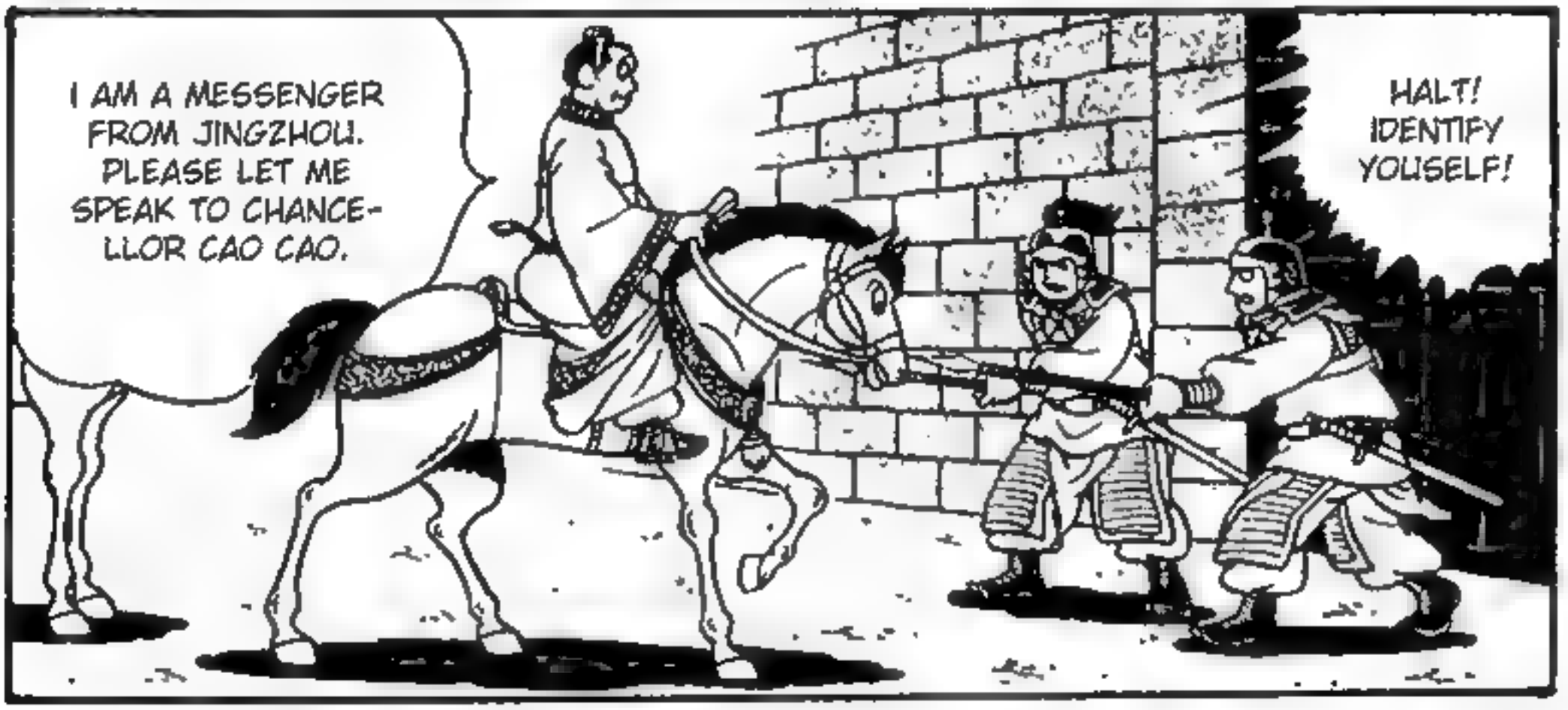
YES, SIR.

SEND AN EMISSARY TO CAO CAO IMMEDIATELY.

WANCHENG
YOU CAN'T FIGHT ON AN EMPTY STOMACH SO MAKE SURE TO LOAD ENOUGH FOOD ON THE WAGONS!

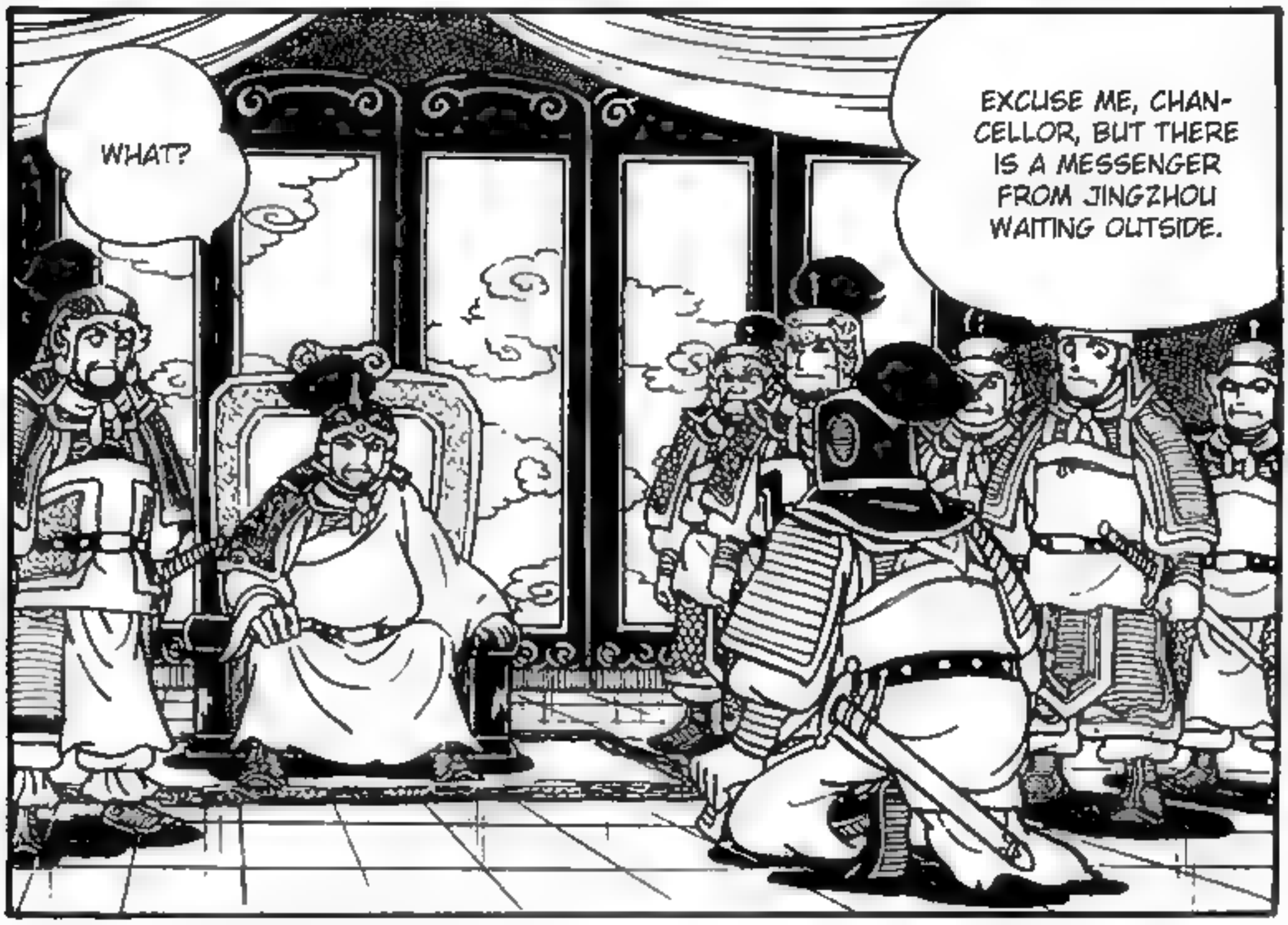

HAVE THE BOW AND ARROWS BEEN LOADED YET?

HM?


I AM A MESSENGER FROM JINGZHOU. PLEASE LET ME SPEAK TO CHANCE-LLOR CAO CAO.
HALT! IDENTIFY YOURSELF!

JUST WAIT RIGHT HERE.

A MESSEN-GER FROM JINGZHOU!?


WHAT?
EXCUSE ME, CHAN-CELLOR, BUT THERE IS A MESSENGER FROM JINGZHOU WAITING OUTSIDE.

YES, SIR.

LET HIM IN.

THANK YOU.
THE CHANCE-LLOR HAS AGREED TO MEET YOU. COME THIS WAY.

STATE YOUR BUSINESS WITH ME.

GREETINGS, CHANCELLOR.

MY LORD HAS SENT ME HERE TO STATE THAT JINGZHOU HAS NO INTENTION OF OPPOSING SIR.

YES, SIR.

SO YOU SURRENDER?

IT SEEMS JINGZHOU IS WISER THAN I THOUGHT.

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

YES, OF COURSE.

LET ME SEE THE LETTER.

I, CAO CAO, AM NO BRUTE WHO WOULD FIGHT THOSE SEEKING PEACE.

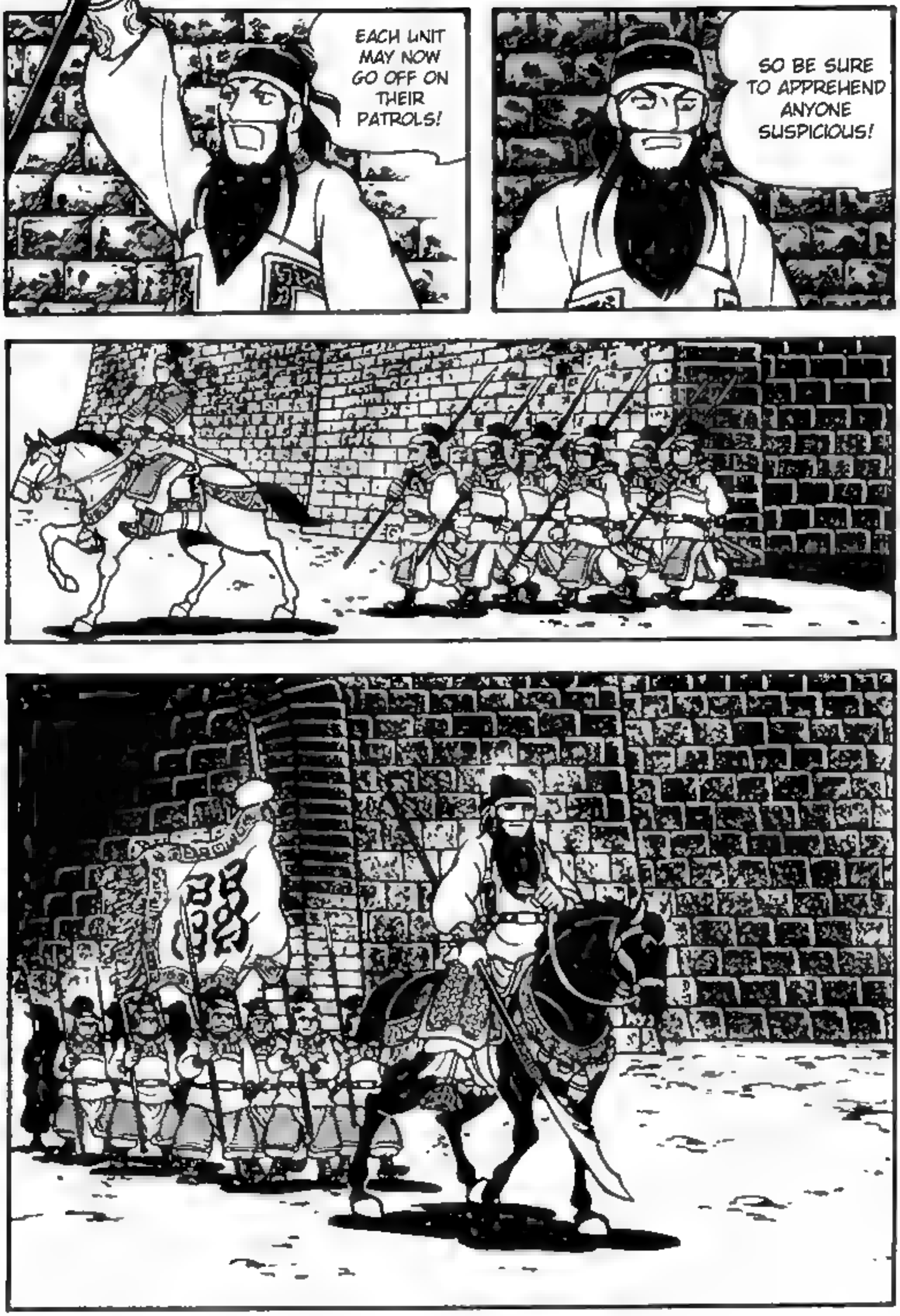
YES, THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY A LETTER OF PEACE.

YES, SIR.

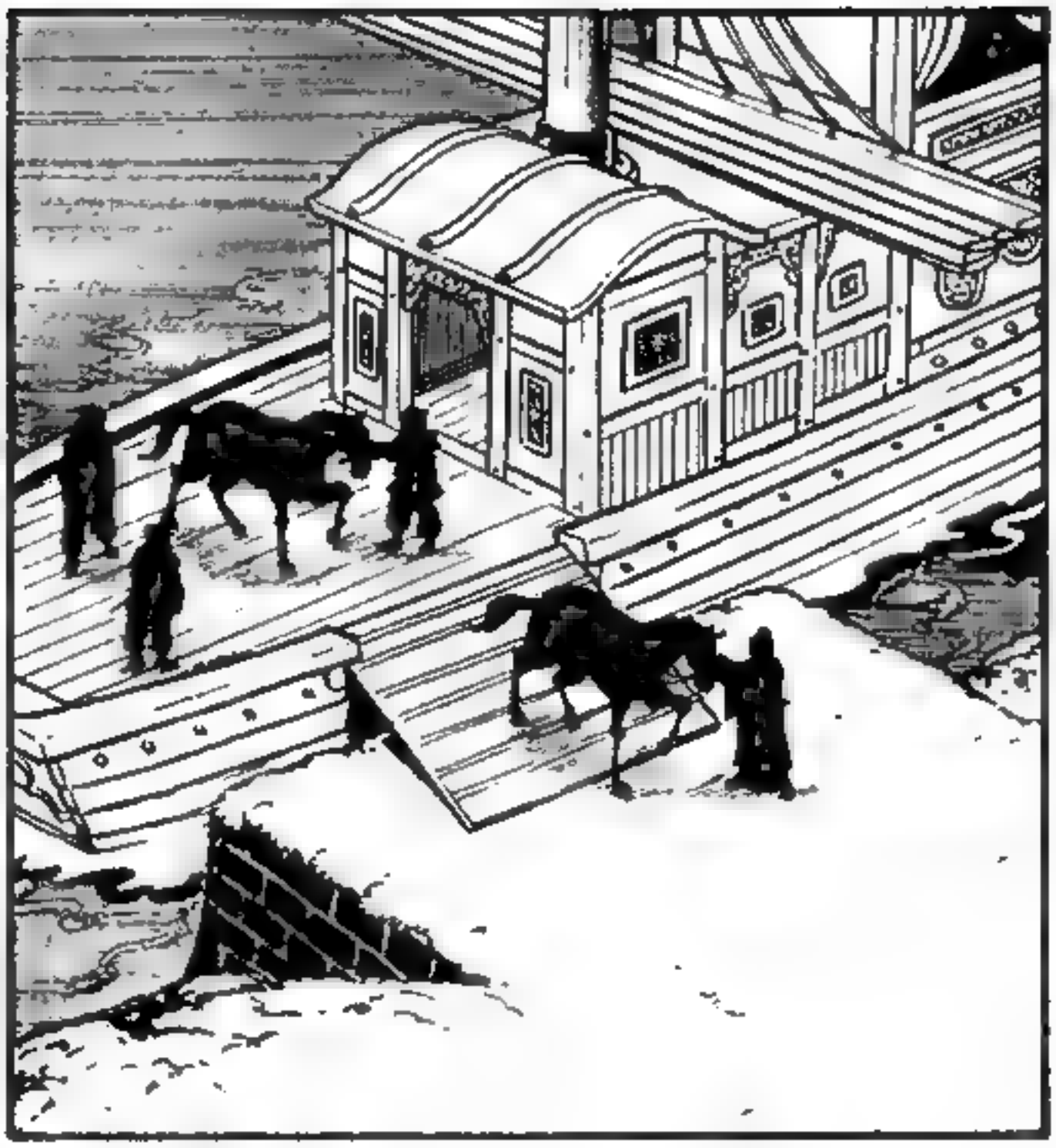
ALSO, HE IS TO COME OUT OF HIS CASTLE AND GREET ME WHEN MY ARMY ARRIVES AT JINGZHOU IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

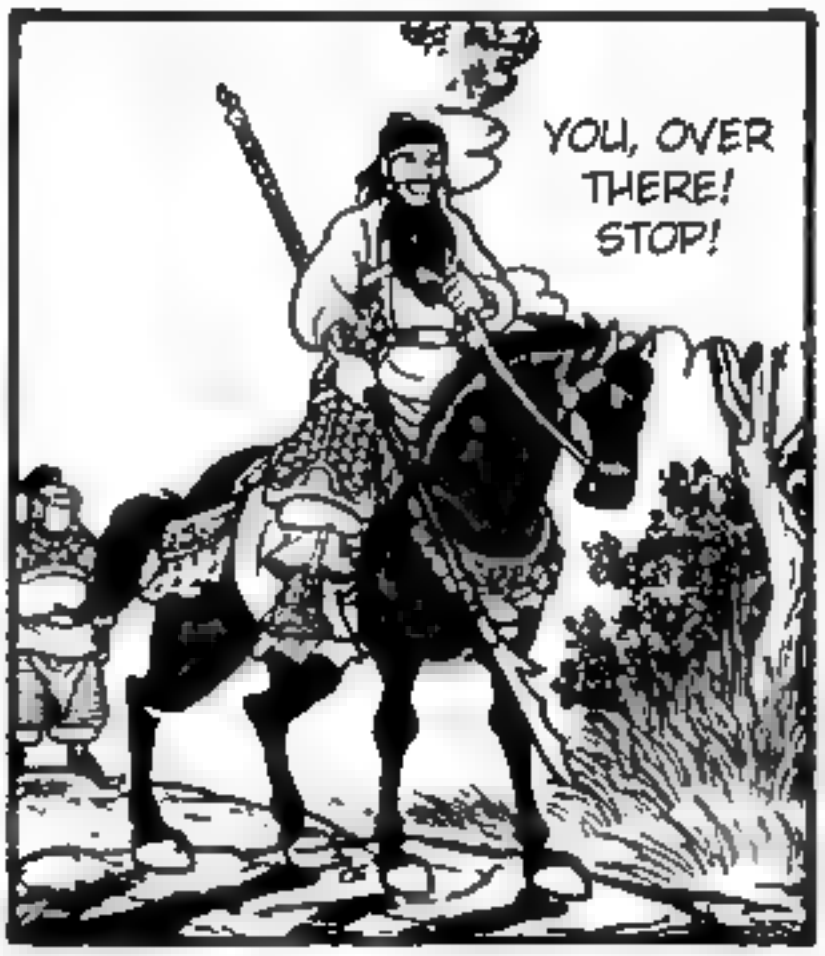
TELL YOUR LORD LIU CONG THAT I ACCEPT HIS PEACE AND SHALL GUARANTEEE HIS POSITION AS JINGZHOU'S LORD.

XINYE
劉
劉
ACCORDING TO OUR REPORTS, CAO CAO'S FORCES HAVE ALREADY REACHED WANCHENG. THUS, IT IS HIGHLY LIKELY THAT HIS SPIES ARE ALREADY IN OUR LANDS.


EACH UNIT MAY NOW GO OFF ON THEIR PATROLS!
SO BE SURE TO APPREHEND ANYONE SUSPICIOUS!

HMM?




YOU, OVER THERE! STOP!

I AM NO ONE SUSPICIOUS, SIR.

I AM GUAN YU, ENTASKED WITH PROTECTING THESE REGIONS. IDENTIFY YOURSELF.

I AM SONG ZONG, AN ENVOY FROM JINGZHOU.

THEN IDENTIFY YOURSELF.

WELL, I...

AN ENVOY FROM JINGZHOU? WHY IS AN ENVOY FROM JINGZHOU TRAVELLING IN THESE PARTS?

WHAT!?

I WAS ON MY WAY BACK FROM MEETING WITH CAO CAO IN WANCHENG...

WHAT!?

TO NEGOTIATE A TRUCE...

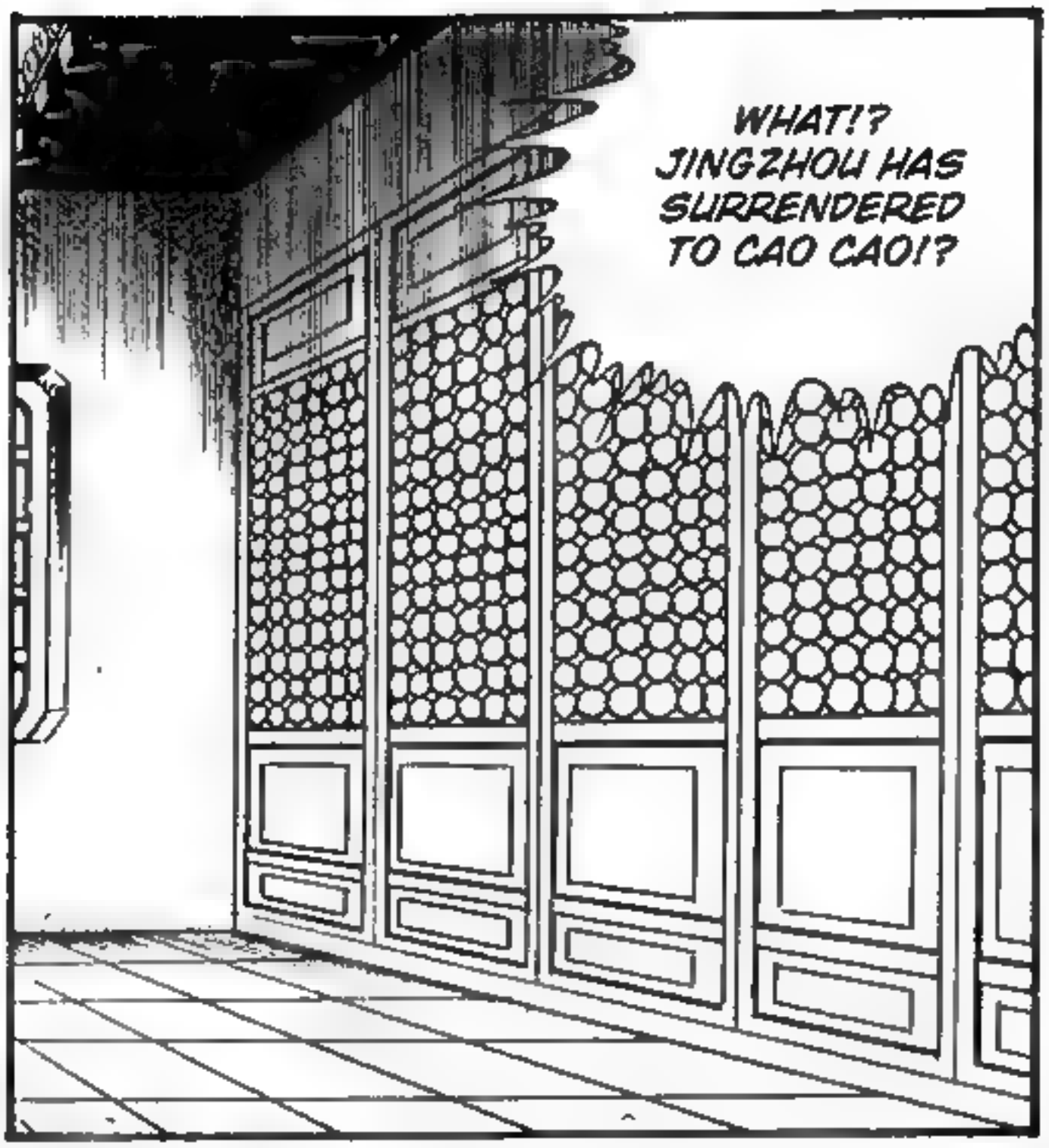
WHAT DID YOU SEE CAO CAO FOR?

Y-YES...

THAT IS NO LIGHT MATTER! I SHALL BRING YOU TO LORD LIU BEI, TO WHOM YOU WILL TELL THE DETAILS TO!

HOW COULD THIS BE...

I WAS MERELY FOLLOWING ORDERS...


WHAT!? JINGZHOU HAS SURRENDERED TO CAO CAO!?

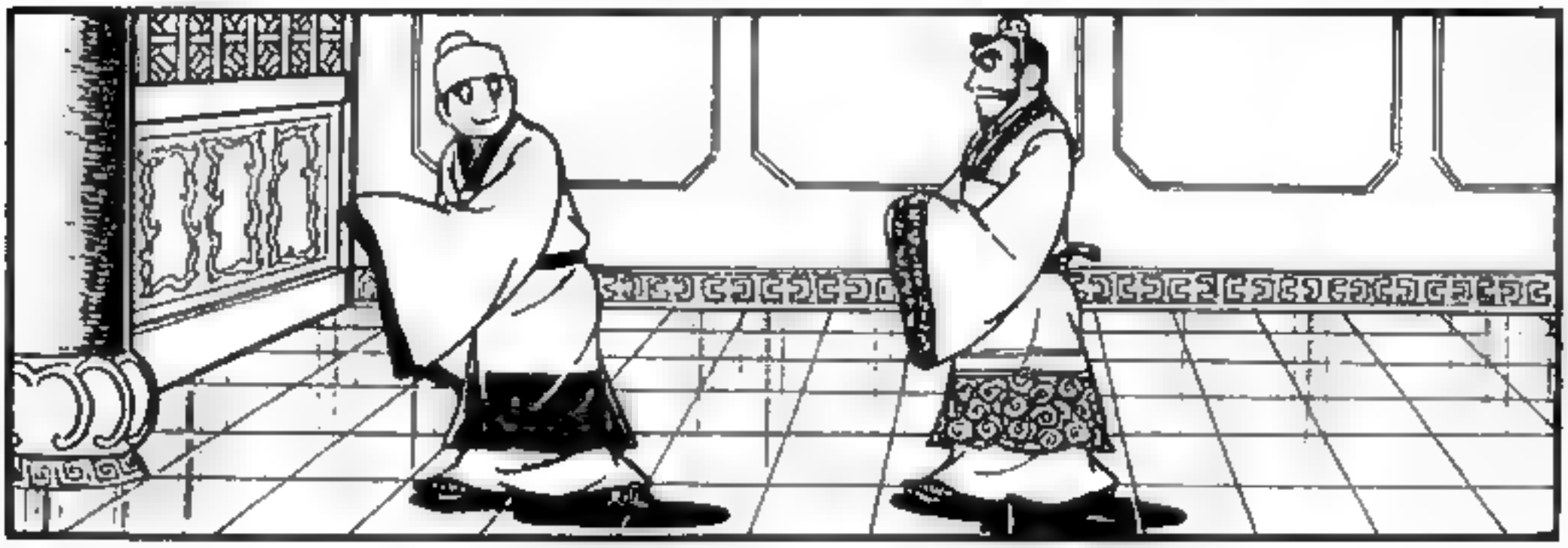
IT IS CLEAR WHAT WE MUST DO NOW, MY LORD. LET US CAPTURE JINGZHOU BEFORE CAO CAO GETS HIS HANDS ON IT.

WHY NOT?

NO...

AS FOR THAT ENVOY, LET HIM GO.

AH, GOOD. LET HIM IN.
MY LORD, A MAN NAMED YI JI WISHES TO SEE YOU.

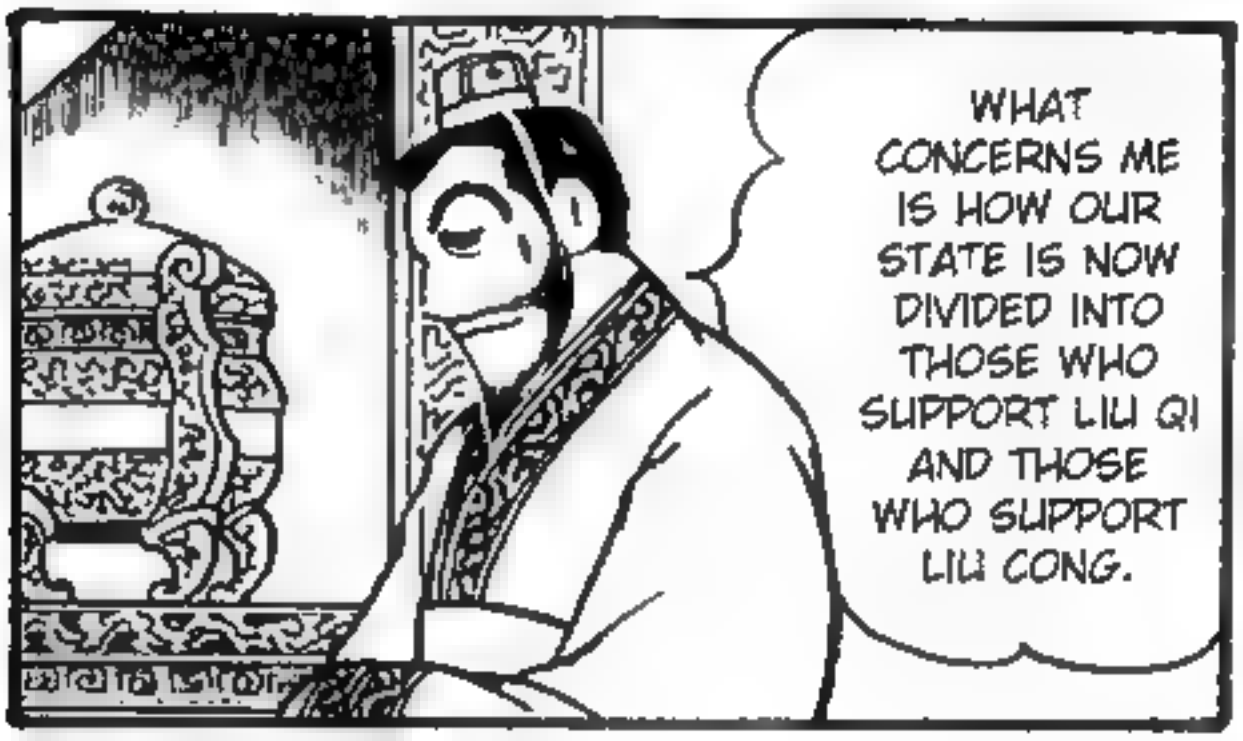


SO WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE TODAY?

LIU QI HAS SENT ME HERE TO DISCUSS CERTAIN MATTERS.

I FEEL THE SAME WAY, SIR.
IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, YI JI.

THE TRUTH IS, THE CAI FAMILY HAS FORCIBLY SET LIU CONG AS JINGZHOU'S NEW LORD.
AND WHAT WOULD THAT BE?


WHAT CONCERNS ME IS HOW OUR STATE IS NOW DIVIDED INTO THOSE WHO SUPPORT LIU QI AND THOSE WHO SUPPORT LIU CONG.

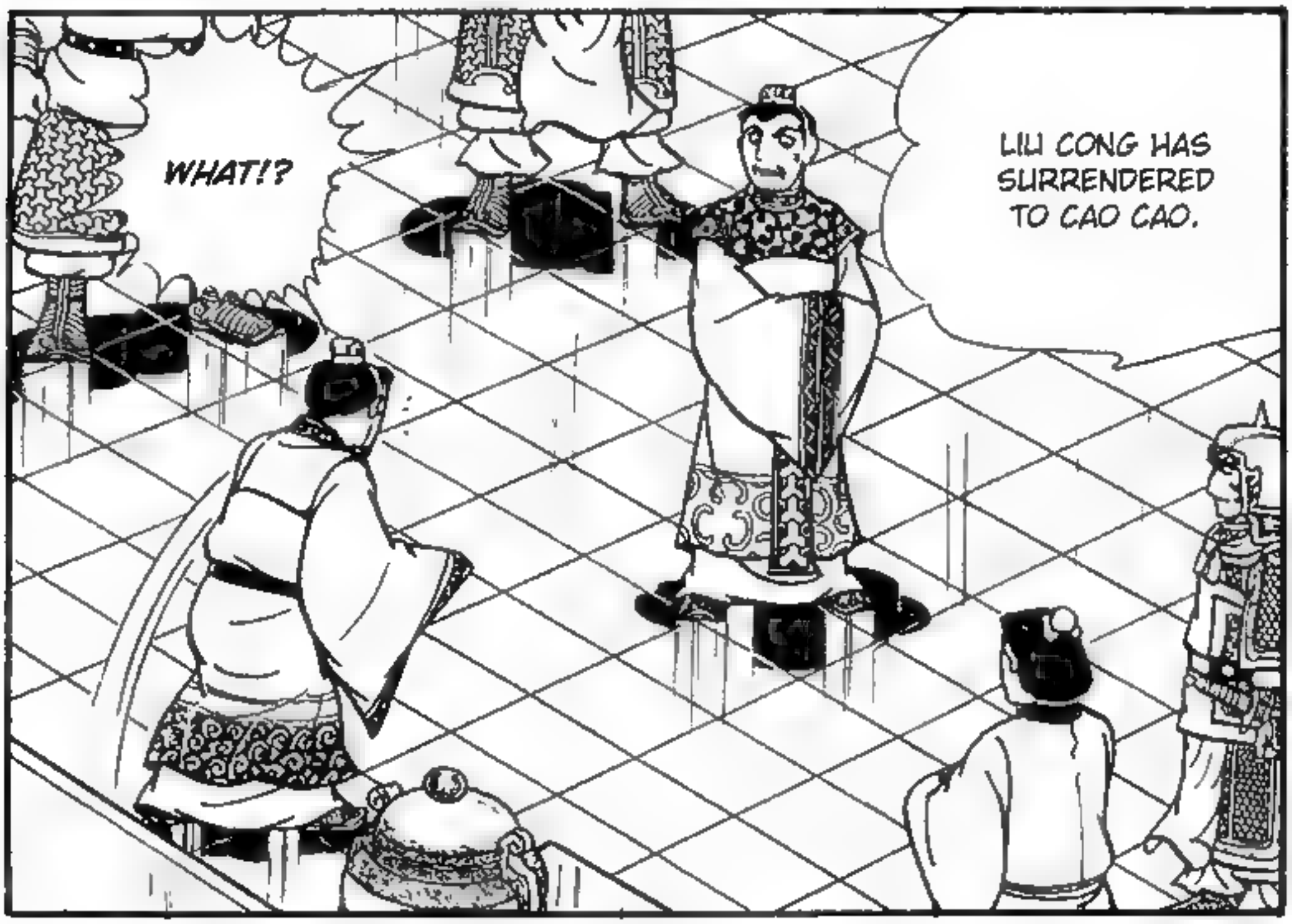
YES, I'VE HEARD...

YES, THAT WAS MY BIGGEST WORRY TOO.

AT THIS RATE, I FEAR JINGZHOU WILL FALL FROM WITHIN EVEN WITHOUT CAO CAO ATTACKING.

HM?

BUT NOW THERE IS AN EVEN BIGGER WORRY.


WHAT!?
LIU CONG HAS SURRENDERED TO CAO CAO.

UNFORTU-
NATELY YES.

I-IS THAT
TRUE?

SURELY, YOU
DON'T
APPROVE OF
THIS, DO YOU?

H-HOW
CAN
THAT
BE...

THEN WHY DO
YOU NOT SEEK
REVENGE
AGAINST THE
CAI FAMILY?

OF
COURSE
NOT.

ONCE THEY HAVE
BEEN DEALT WITH,
YOU SHOULD THEN
TAKE DIRECT
CONTROL OF
JINGZHOU AND FIGHT
AGAINST CAO CAO.

YOU SHOULD GO TO
XIANGYANG ON THE
PRETENSE OF ATTENDING
THE MOURNING CEREMO-
NIES BUT THEN STAGE AN
AMBUSH ON LIU CONG
AND THE CAI FAMILY.

I'M AFRAID THAT'S THE ONE THING I CANNOT DO...

I AGREE WITH YI JI'S PLAN.

YOU MUST NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE GREATER PICTURE, MY LORD.

AT HIS DEATHBED, LIU BIAO APPOINTED ME AS THE GUARDIAN OF HIS SONS AND ASKED ME TO KEEP THEM AND JINGZHOU SAFE. SO HOW CAN I ALLOW MYSELF TO MURDER ONE OF HIS SONS AND STEAL HIS LANDS?

WE CAN ONLY FIGHT EVENLY WITH CAO CAO IF JINGZHOU IS IN OUR HANDS. JUST HOW DO YOU PROPOSE TO FIGHT CAO CAO IF YOU ALLOW HIM TO BECOME EVEN STRONGER BY CONQUERING JINGZHOU?

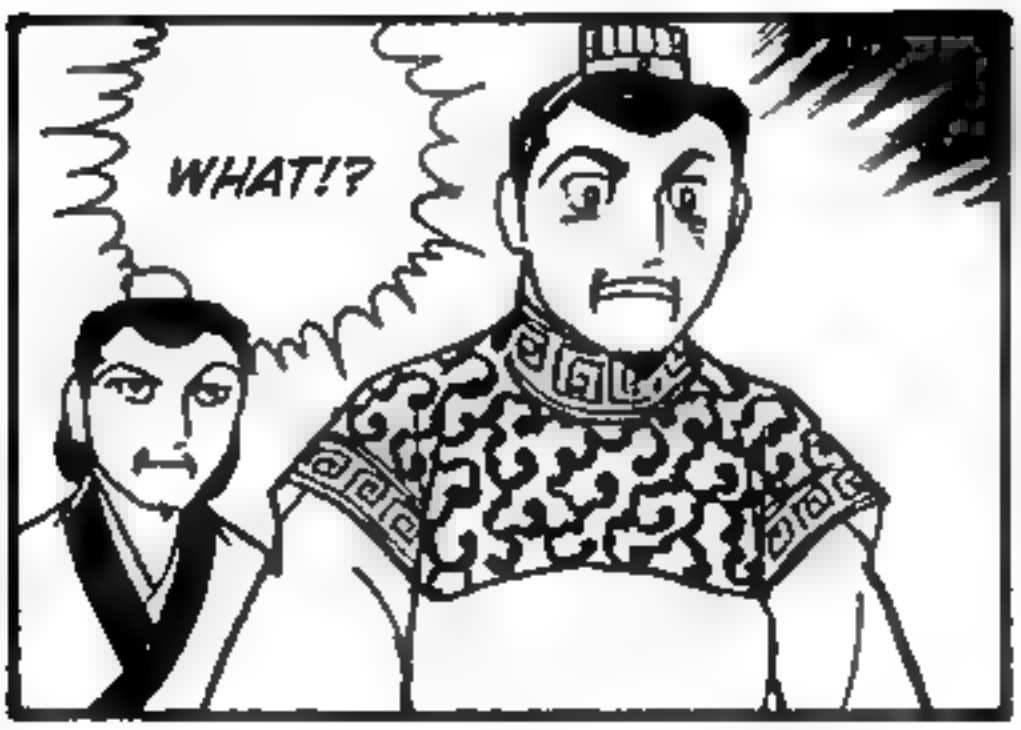
HOW REGRET-TABLE...

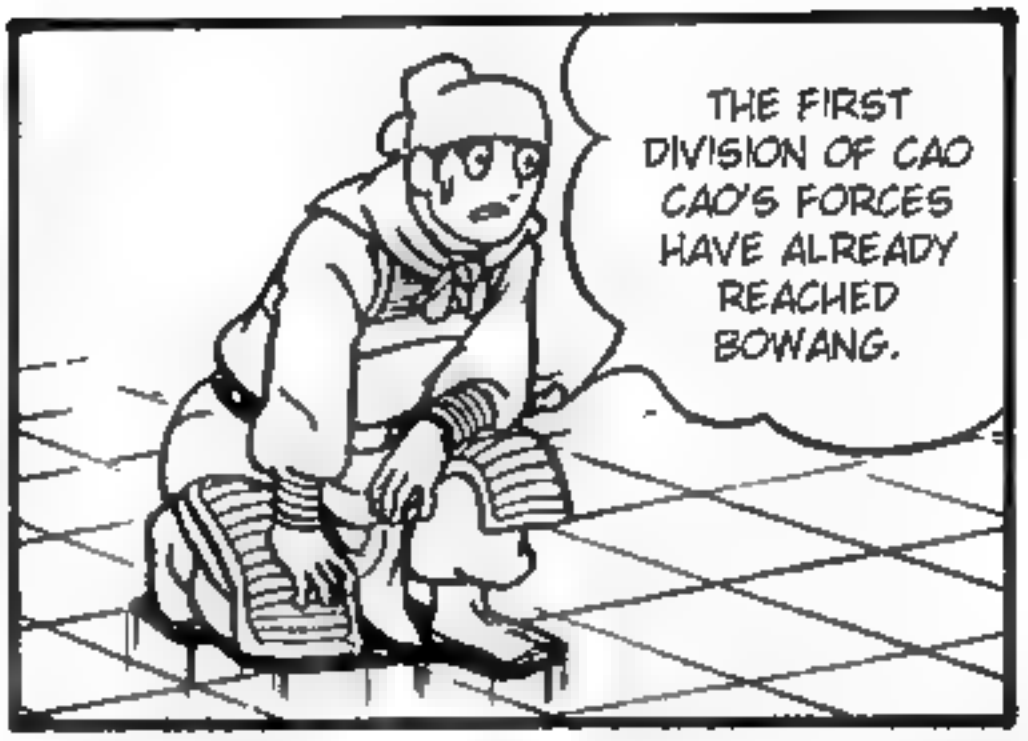
I KNOW... I KNOW BUT I JUST CAN'T...

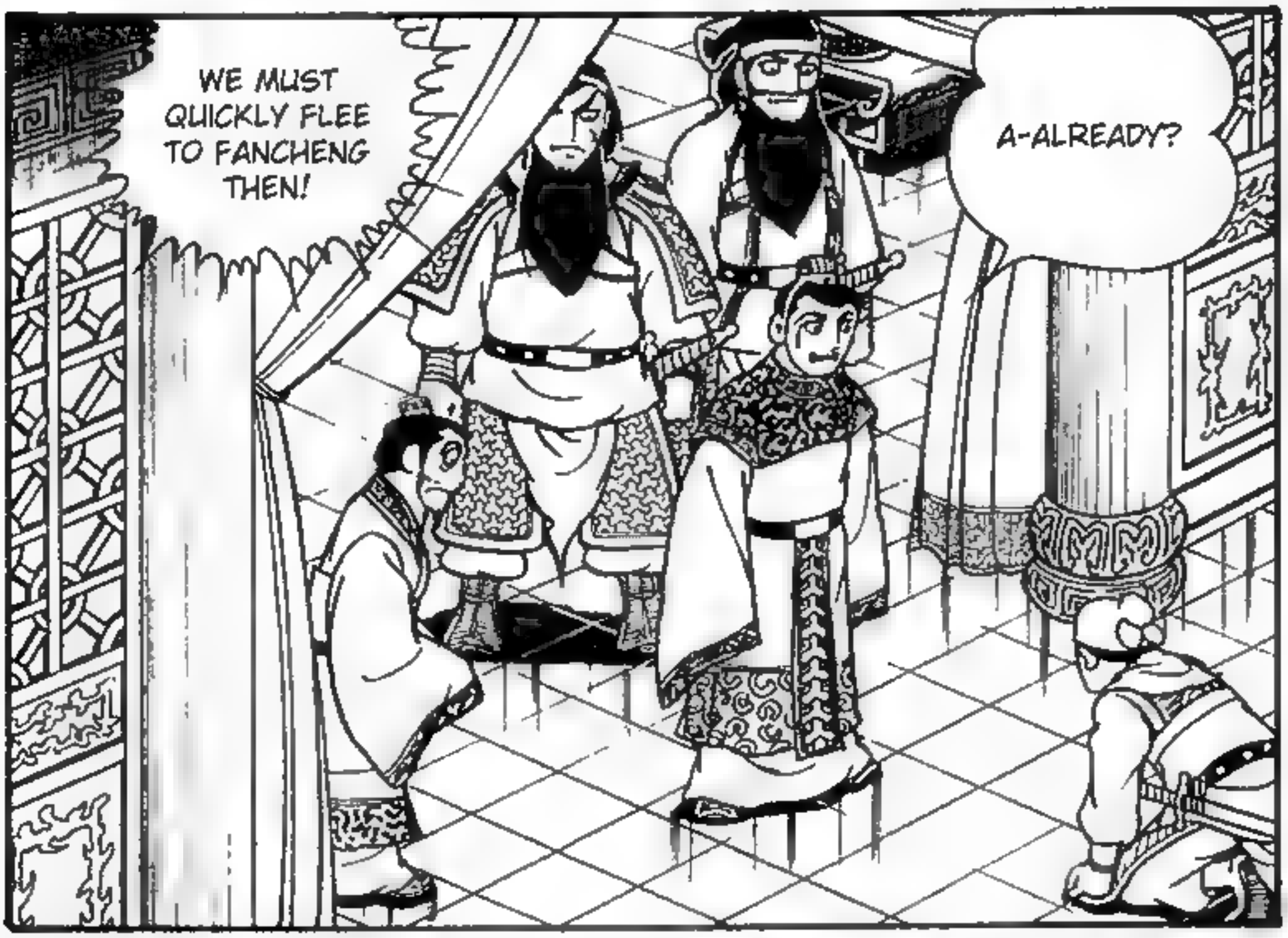
.....
WHY DON'T WE ABANDON XINYE AND TAKE REFUGE IN FANCHENG FOR THE TIME BEING?

KONGMING BURNS XINYE

SIR!


WHAT!?


THE FIRST DIVISION OF CAO CAO'S FORCES HAVE ALREADY REACHED BOWANG.


WE MUST QUICKLY FLEE TO FANCHENG THEN!
A-ALREADY?

GENTLEMEN, DO NOT PANIC! I'VE ALREADY COME UP WITH A PLAN SO JUST FOLLOW MY ORDERS!

THOSE WHO REMAIN BEHIND WILL BE MERCILESSLY SLAUGHTERED BY CAO CAO'S ARMY.

FIRST, PUT UP NOTICES AT ALL GATES WITH THE FOLLOWING WRITTEN ON THEM:

EVERY MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD IS TO FOLLOW OUR LORD IN EVACUATING TO FANCHENG.

YES.

SUN QIAN, YOU ARE TO GO TO XIHE AND PREPARE BOATS SO THE CITIZENS CAN CROSS THE RIVER ON THEIR WAY TO FANCHENG.

UNDER-STOOD.

MI ZHU, I WANT YOU TO STAY WITH THE CITIZENS AND GUIDE THEM TO FANCHENG.

ZHANG FEI. YOU, TOO, SHALL TAKE 1000 SOLDIERS AND WAIT ALONG THE WHITE RIVER. ONCE THE DAM HAS BEEN UNLEASHED AND THE ENEMY ARMY FLOODED, YOU WILL HELP GUAN YU AMBUSH THE SURVIVORS.

TOMORROW NIGHT, WHEN YOU HEAR THE ENEMY ARMY APPROACHING, UNLEASH THE DAMN AND ATTACK THE SURVIVORS.

GUAN YU, TAKE 1000 SOLDIERS AND GO UPSTREAM OF THE WHITE RIVER. THERE, YOU SHALL DAMN UP THE RIVER.

ZHAO ZILONG.

GOT IT.

YOU SHALL THEN PILE THEM UP ON THE ROOFS OF THE BUILDINGS HERE IN XINYE.

TAKE 3000 MEN AND START GATHERING DRIED WOOD, GRASSES, SULPHUR, AND OTHER COMBUSTIBLES.

YES?

I EXPECT THE WINDS WILL BE QUITE STRONG TOMORROW NIGHT. IF SO, OUR ENEMIES ARE SURE TO CAMP INSIDE XINYE FOR THE NIGHT.

THAT GATE IS TO BE LEFT SAFE TO ALLOW OUR ENEMIES TO FLEE THROUGH IT.

HIDE YOUR TROOPS OUTSIDE EACH OF XINYE'S 4 GATES. WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT, YOU WILL SHOOT FIRE ARROWS INTO THE CASTLE, SETTING XINYE ABLAZE. DO NOT SET FIRE NEAR THE EASTERN GATES, HOWEVER.

YES.

THUS, WHEN THE ENEMIES COME OUT FROM THE EASTERN GATES, YOU SHALL AMBUSH THEM FOR SOME TIME, BEFORE RETREATING TO THE WHITE RIVER WHERE YOU WILL REGROUP WITH ZHANG FEI AND GUAN YU'S FORCES.

ALRIGHT.

IF EVERYONE UNDER-STANDS, GO CARRY OUT YOUR ORDERS.

WHO KNOWS? BUT THINGS WENT EXACTLY AS KONGMING PLANNED LAST TIME SO LET'S TRUST IN HIM.

DO YOU REALLY THINK THE WINDS WILL BE STRONG TOMORROW NIGHT?

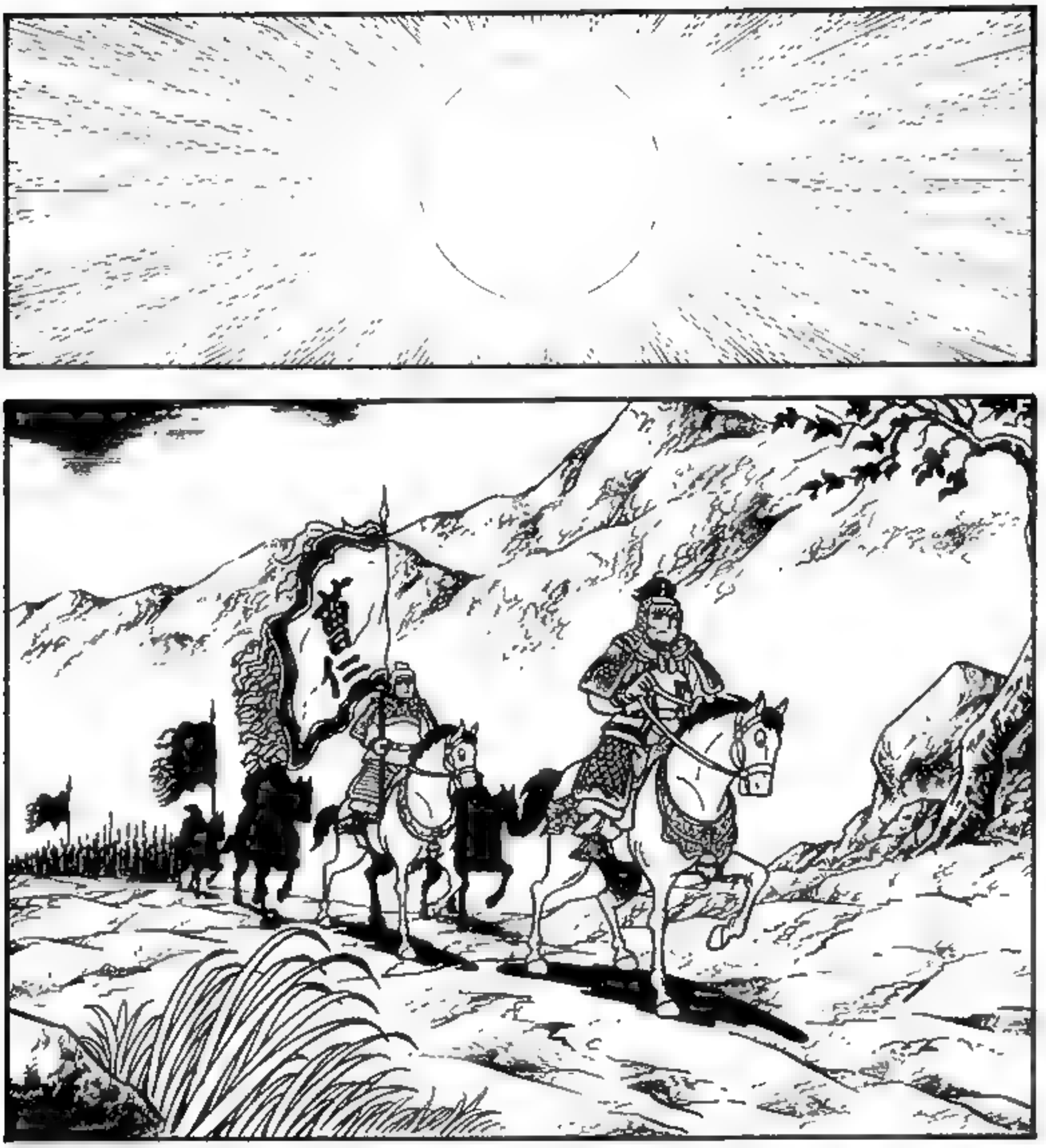
YES?
YES?

MI FANG AND LIU FENG.

?

THIS BLUE FLAG IS FOR LIU FENG AND THIS RED FLAG IS FOR MI FANG.

WHISPER WHISPER



ONLY AROUND 30 LI, SIR.
HOW MUCH FARTHER UNTIL XINYE?

THIS SHOULD BE MAGPIE-TAIL SLOPE, GENERAL.
WHERE ARE WE RIGHT NOW?

SEND OUT THE SCOUTS.

SO WE'RE NEARLY THERE THEN.

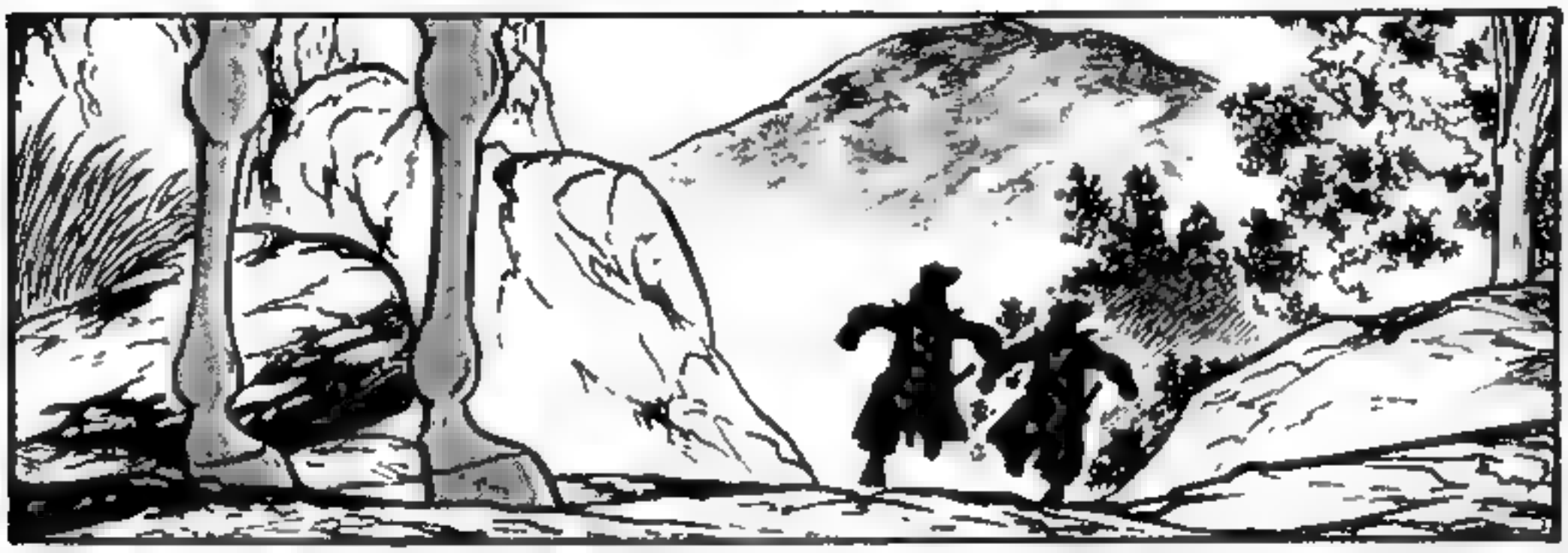
KONGMING IS SURE TO HAVE SET A TRAP FOR US. THUS, WE SHALL WAIT HERE UNTIL OUR SCOUTS COME BACK AND MAKE THEIR REPORTS.

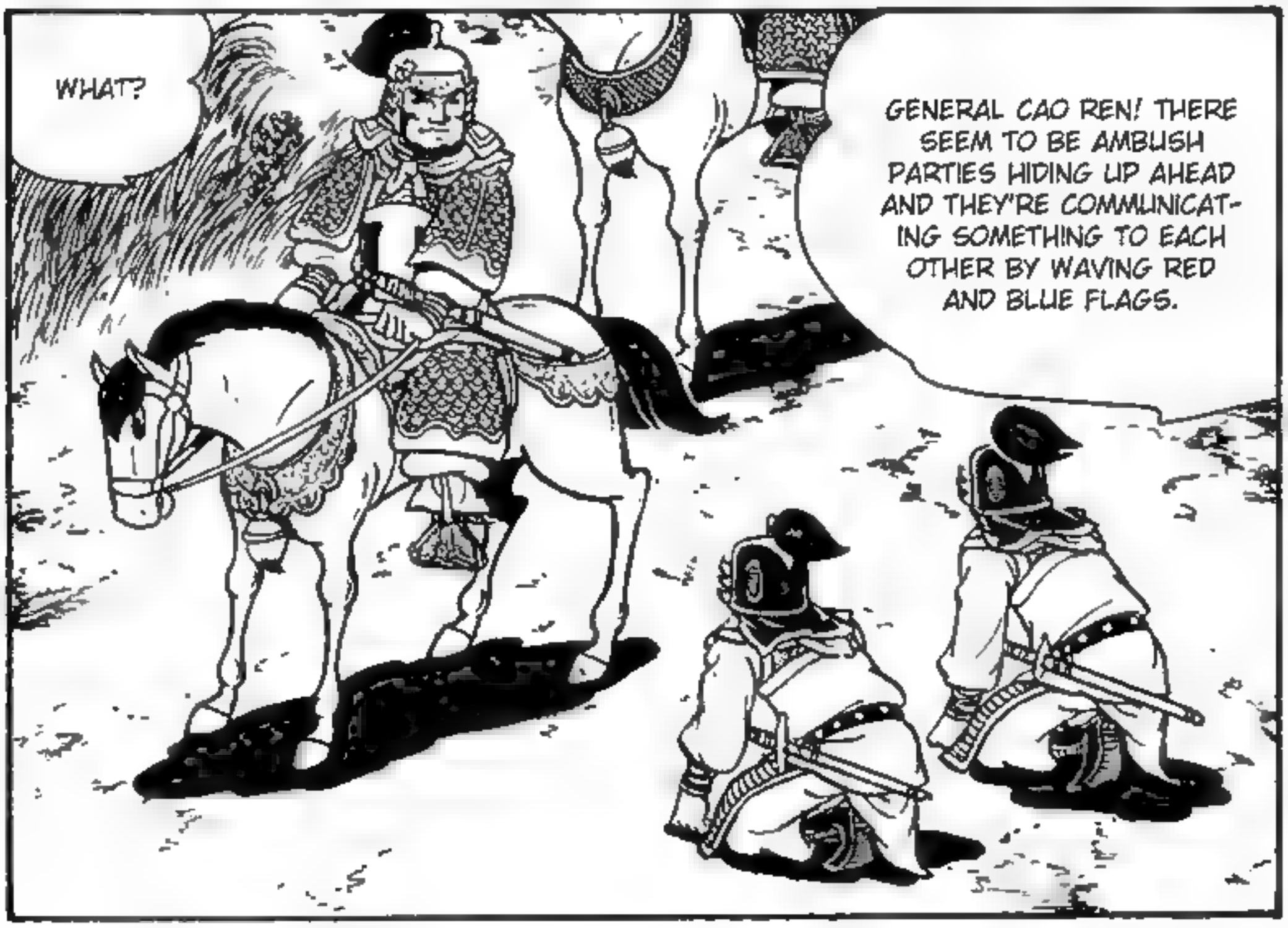
HM?

LOOK OVER THERE AS WELL!

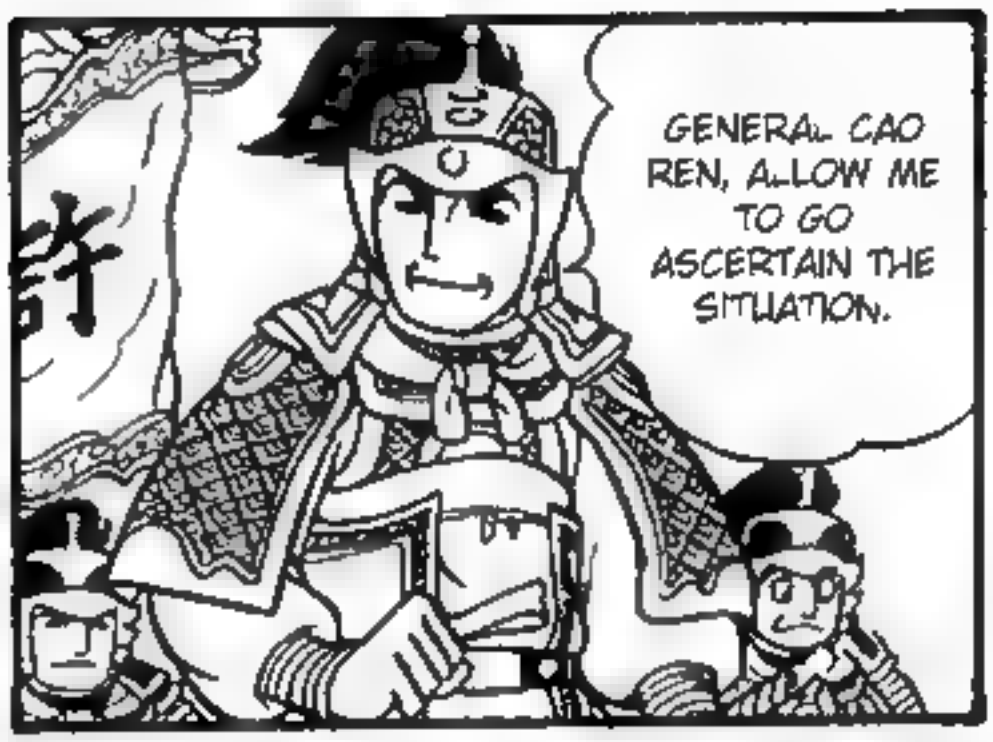
LET'S REPORT THIS TO THE GENERAL AT ONCE!

LOOKS LIKE THE AMBUSH PARTIES ARE COMMUNI-CATING SOME-THING.




WHAT?
GENERAL CAO REN! THERE SEEM TO BE AMBUSH PARTIES HIDING UP AHEAD AND THEY'RE COMMUNICAT-ING SOMETHING TO EACH OTHER BY WAVING RED AND BLUE FLAGS.

YES, THANK YOU, XU CHU.


GENERAL CAO REN, ALLOW ME TO GO ASCERTAIN THE SITUATION.

AFTER ME!

AH!

HMM, I DON'T SEE SIGNS OF AN ENEMY ARMY ANYWHERE...

SO THAT'S WHAT THEY MEANT.

SIR, OVER THERE AS WELL!

HMM, THEY DO INDEED APPEAR TO BE COMMUNICATING SOMETHING.

BEST NOT TO LOWER MY GUARD DOWN.

THE ENEMIES MUST BE PLANNING SOMETHING THOUGH.

BUT OTHER THAN THESE 2 SOLDIERS WAVING THE FLAGS, I DON'T SEE ANY TRACES OF AN AMBUSH PARTY.

JUST WAIT RIGHT HERE, MEN. I SHALL GO CONSULT WITH GENERAL CAO REN.

?

THE ONLY THING I SAW WAS A COUPLE OF SOLDIERS WAVING A BLUE AND RED FLAG AROUND. NO TRACES OF AN ACTUAL AMBUSH PARTY COULD BE SPOTTED, HOWEVER. WHAT SHALL WE DO, SIR?

WHAT IS IT, XU CHU?

IN ORDER TO WIN, ONE MUST PRESENT THE TRUTH AS FALSE, AND THE FALSE AS TRUTH TO ONE'S ENEMIES. I SUSPECT THE FLAGS ARE JUST A BLUFF TO MAKE US FALTER.

I UNDERSTAND IF YOU'RE JUST BEING CAUTIOUS BUT DECEIT IS THE LANGUAGE OF WAR.

HAHAHA. YOU'RE NOT ACTING LIKE YOUR USUAL BRAVE SELF, XU CHU.

UNDER-STOOD, SIR.

LET US MARCH ONWARDS TO XINYE!

RESUME MARCHING, MEN!
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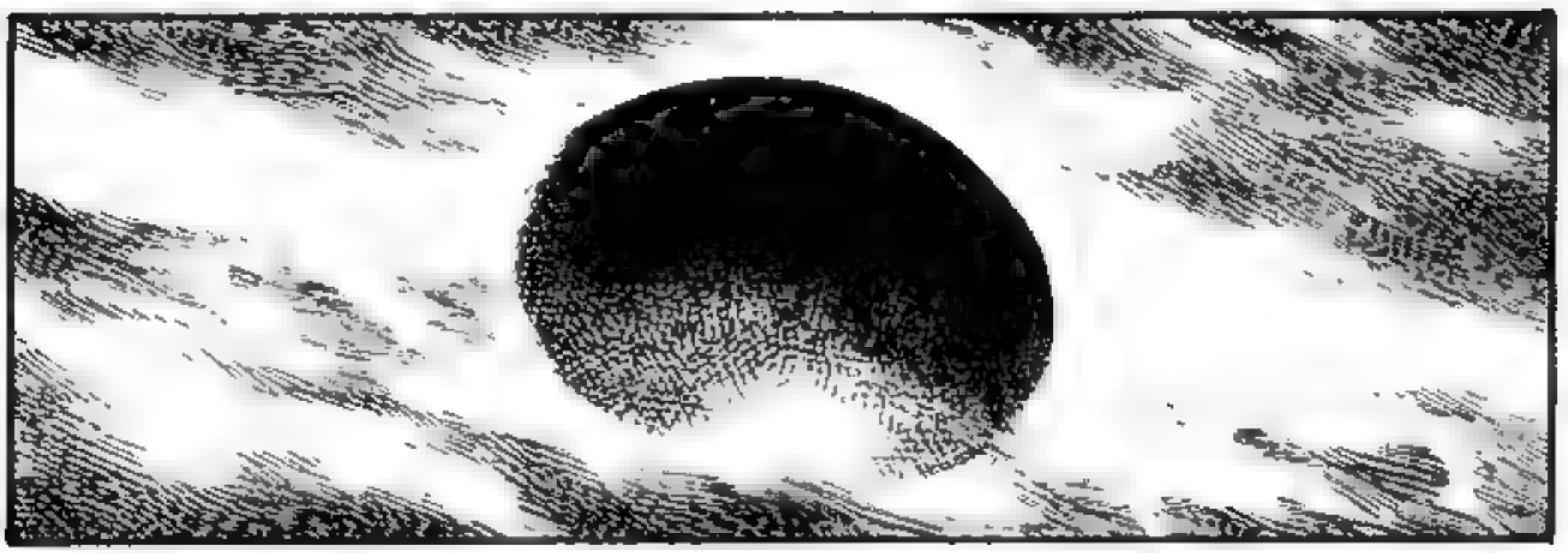
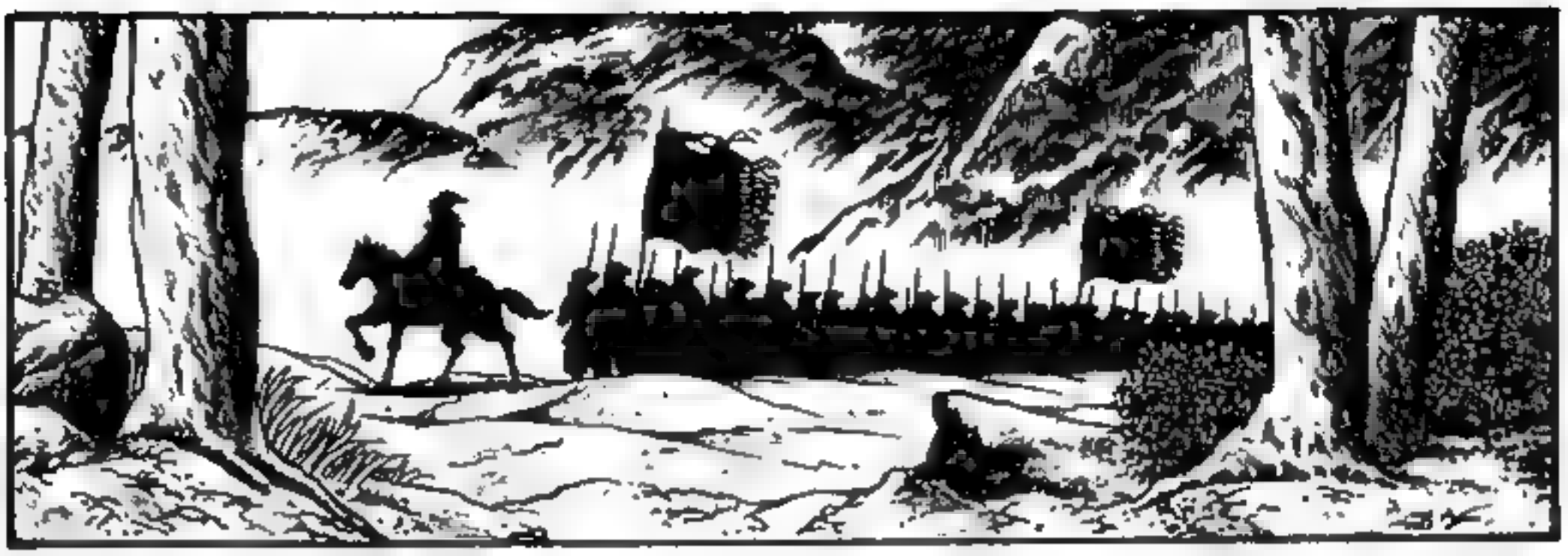


DON'T LET YOUR GUARD DOWN, TROOPS. THE ENEMIES MIGHT STILL BE PLANNING AN AMBUSH.

GENERAL XU CHU, THERE STILL SEEMS TO BE NO SIGN OF THE ENEMIES.



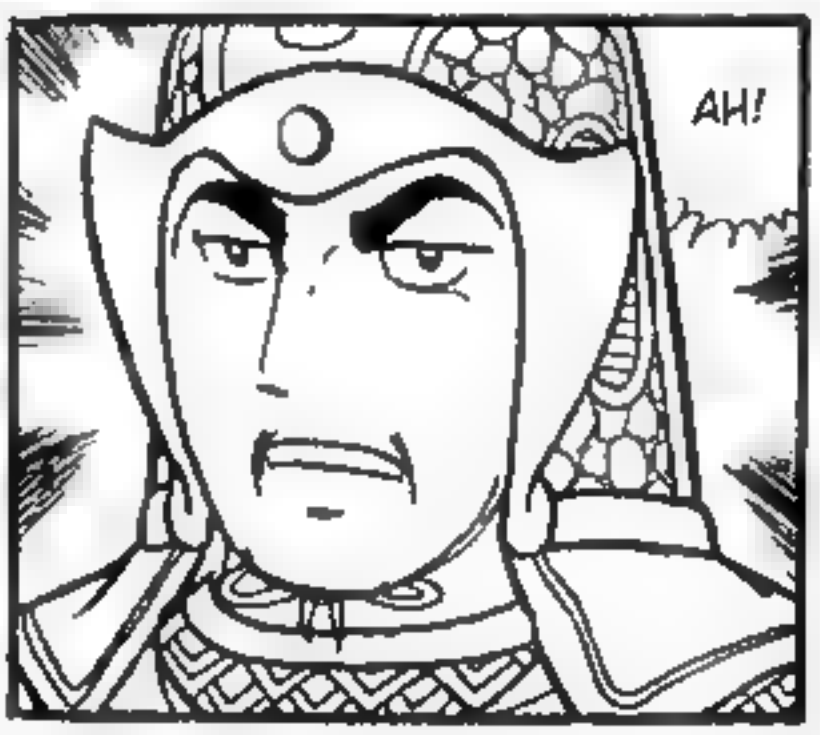
HMM...
SIR, IT'S NIGHT AND THERE STILL SEEMS TO BE NO SIGN OF THE ENEMIES.

SOMETHING FEELS RATHER EERIE...

A HORN?

WHAT'S THAT!?

HM?


AH!

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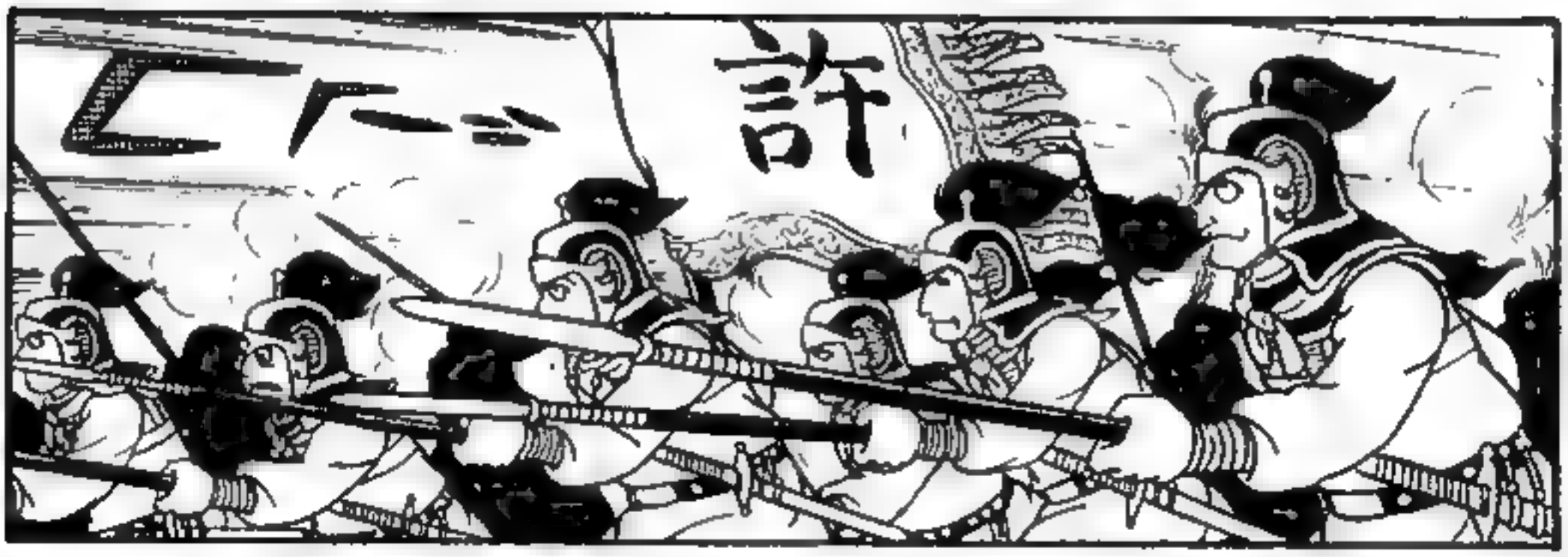
WHAT...!?

THEY SEEM TO BE ENJOYING A GLASS OF WINE, SIR.

ATTACK!

AFTER ALL THAT BLUFFING ABOUT AN AMBUSH, THEY DARE DRINK WINE IN FRONT OF US!?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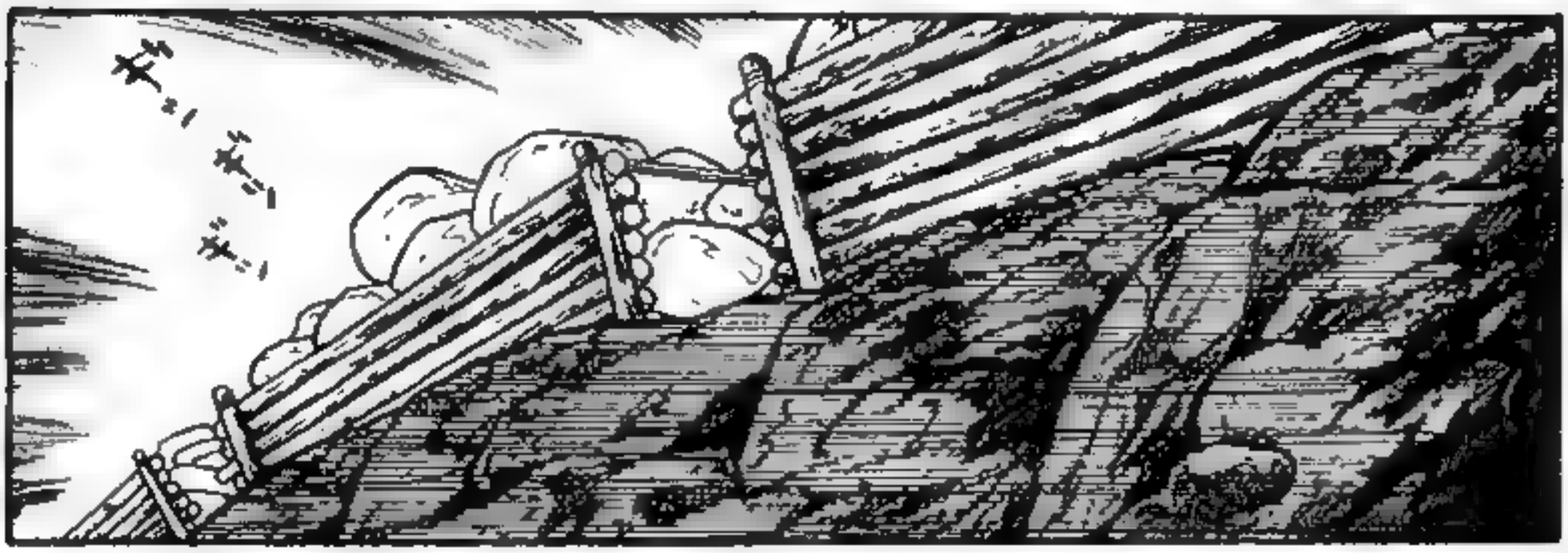
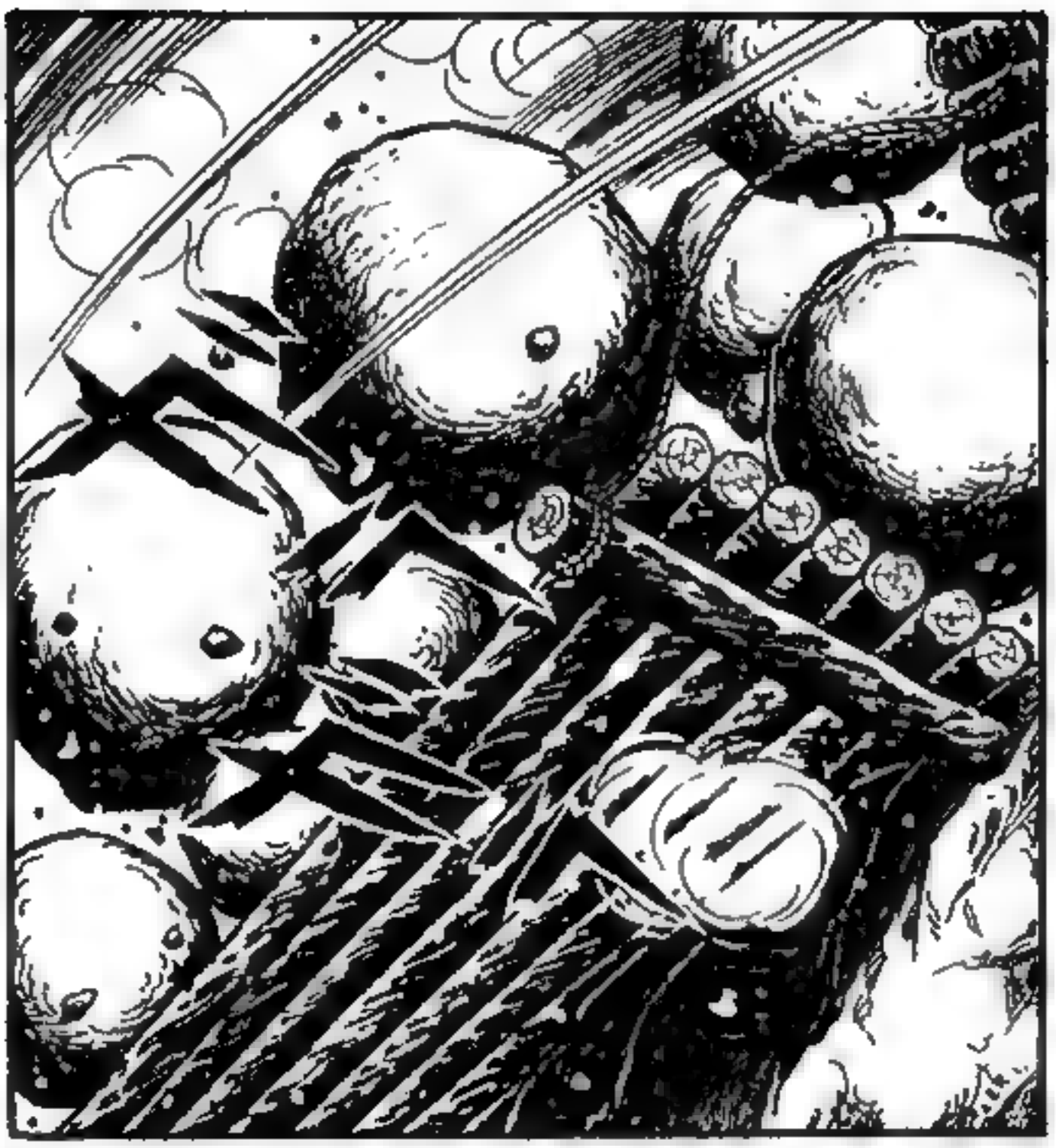


AH!

PULL BACK!



CLANG!
CLANG!
CLANG! CLANG!
CLANG! CLANG!

許

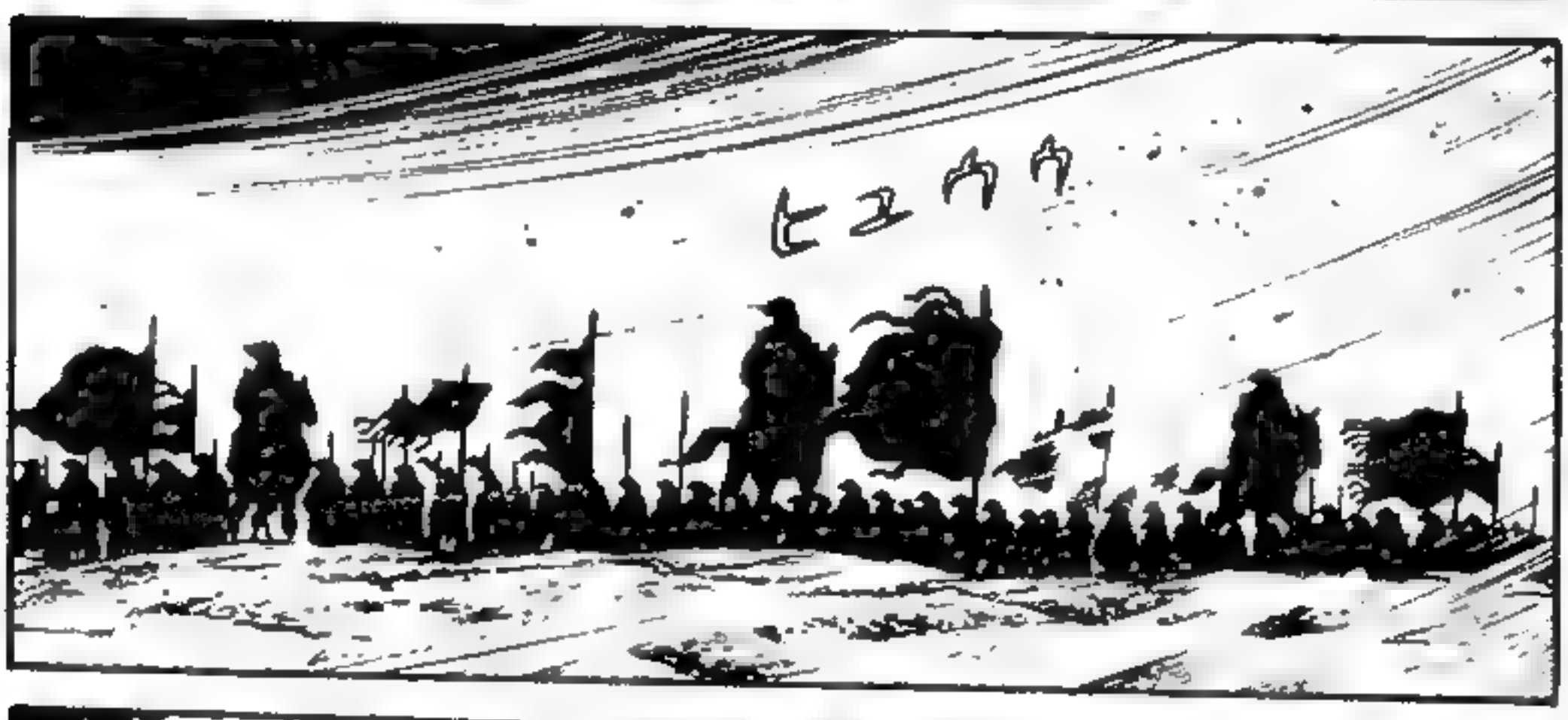
CURSES, WE'VE BEEN SURROUNDED!

WE'VE BEEN SURROUNDED BY THE ENEMIES!

WHAT'S WRONG, XU CHU?

THIS IS CLEARLY ANOTHER BLUFF! IGNORE IT AND CONTINUE MARCHING!

WHAT NONSENSE DO YOU SPEAK OF!? I HEAR THE GONGS RINGING BUT FAIL TO SEE EVEN A SINGLE ENEMY SOLDIER!



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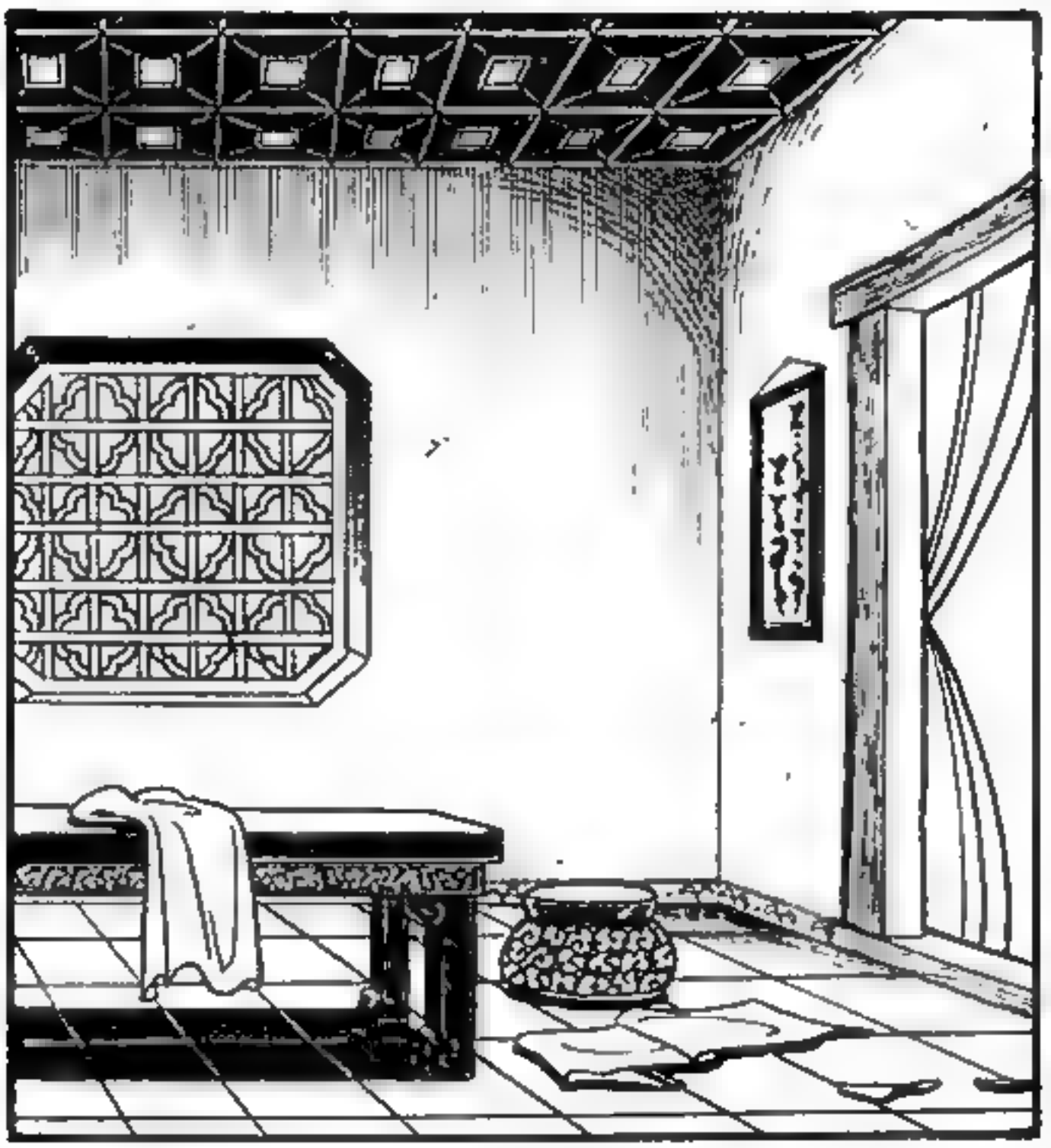
SEARCH THE ENTIRE CITY!

THAT'S STRANGE. THERE'RE NO SIGNS OF PEOPLE HERE.



HAHAHA, SO THAT'S HOW IT WAS. THEY TRIED TO STOP OUR ADVANCE BY BLUFFING BUT BECAUSE WE WEREN'T FOOLED, THEY HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO ABANDON XINYE.

ALL THE HOMES APPEAR TO BE ABANDONED, GENERAL.

SHALL WE PURSUE THE ENEMIES, SIR?

IT SEEMS THAT EVEN THE GREAT KONGMING IS POWERLESS AS LONG AS WE DON'T FALL FOR HIS TRICKS!

NO, OUR TROOPS ARE TIRED AND HUNGRY FROM MARCHING ALL DAY. WE CAN STILL CATCH UP TO OUR ENEMIES EVEN IF WE SPEND THE NIGHT HERE TONIGHT.

LET THE TROOPS REST HERE TONIGHT!

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בייבוק

F-R-E-

YES, IT'S A GOOD THING WE DIDN'T CONTINUE THE PURSUIT FOR TONIGHT.
THE WINDS ARE QUITE STRONG TONIGHT.

DO NOT PANIC!

YOU'RE RIGHT, SIR.

I'M SURE IT'S ONLY SOME COOKING FIRE MISHAP SO STAY CALM. IF WE GENERALS ARE TO PANIC, IT'D ONLY MAKE THE SITUATION WORSE.

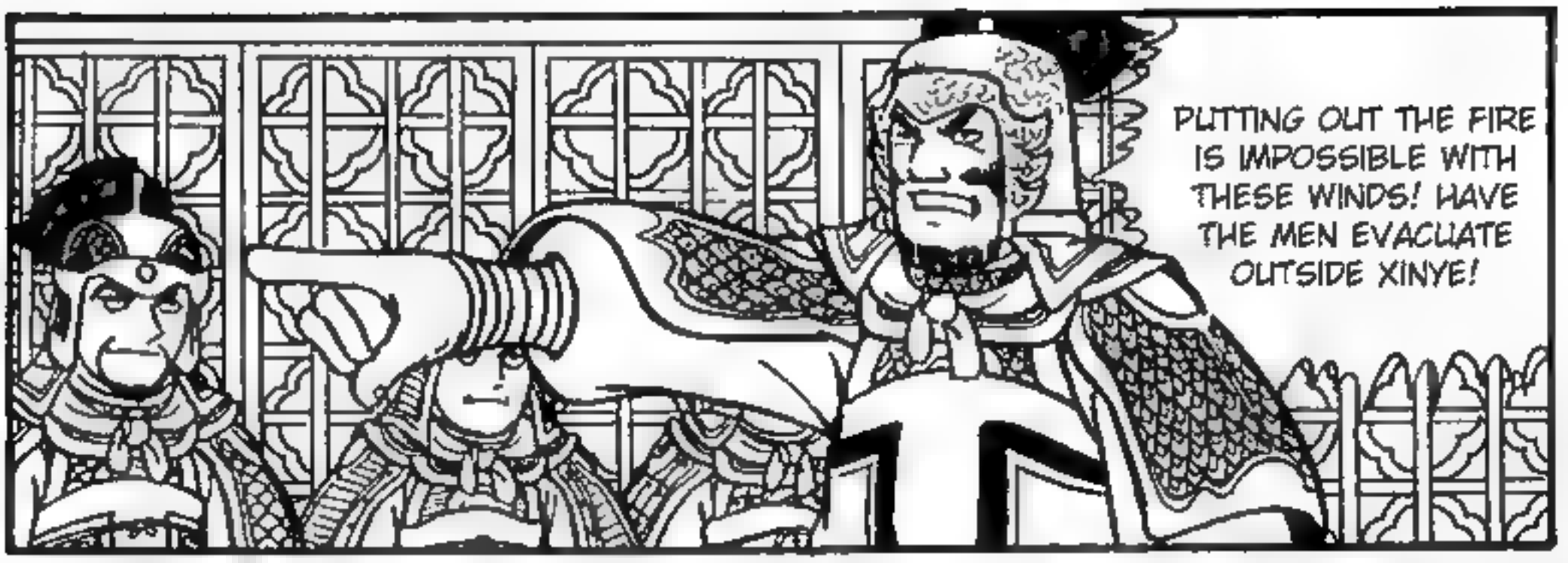
THAT SOUNDS LIKE NO ORDINARY FIRE, SIR.

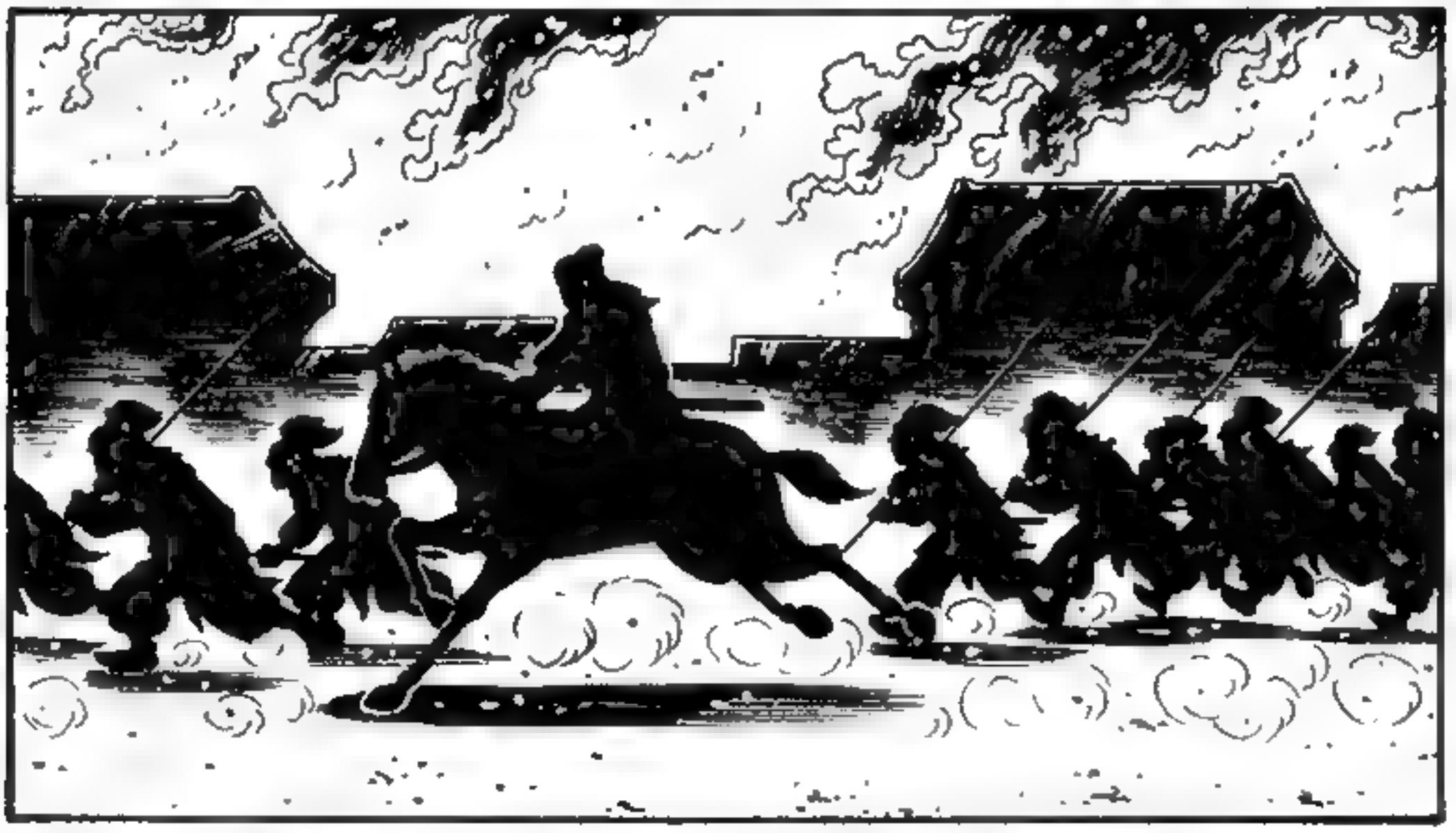
HM?

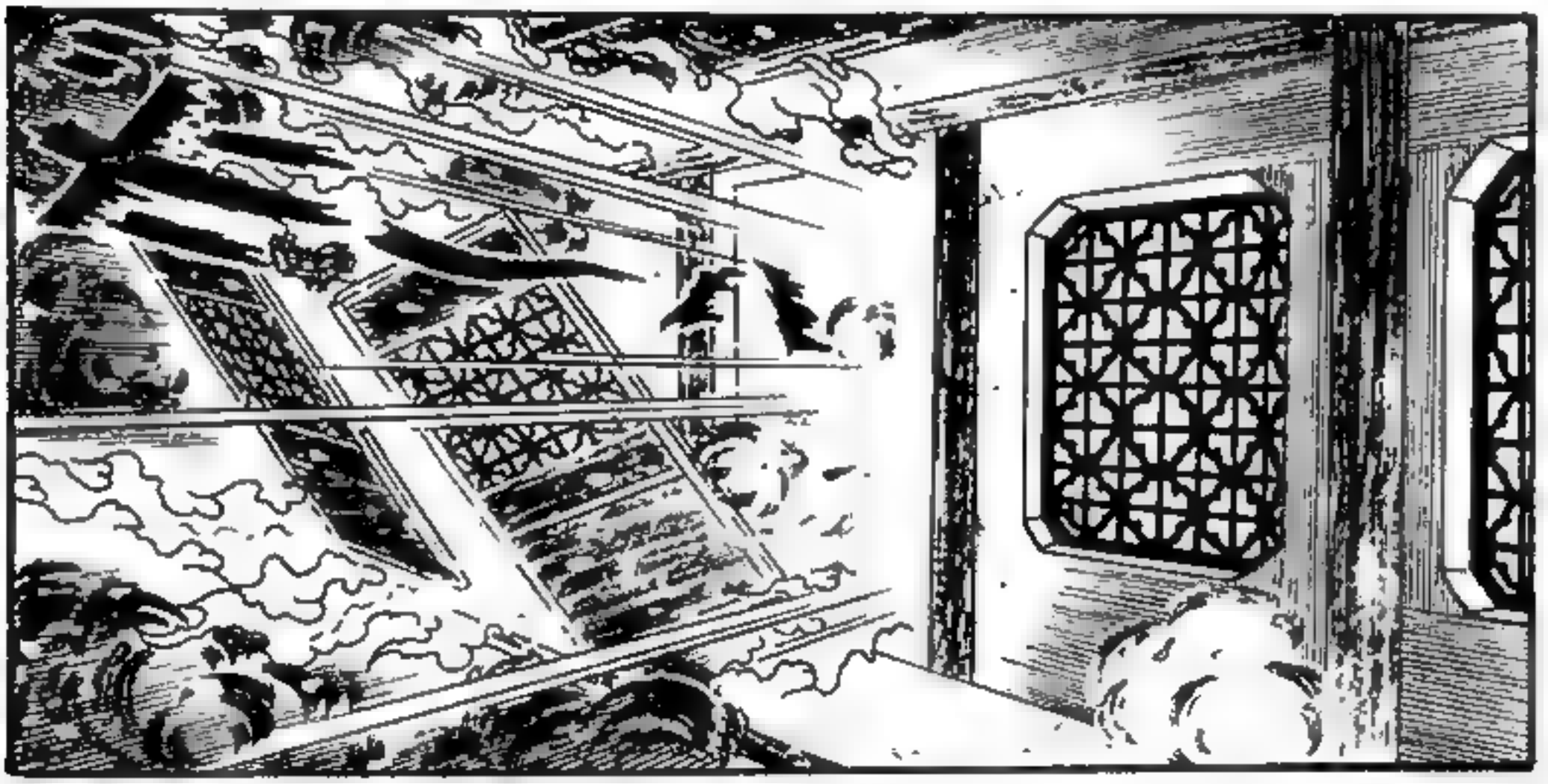
AHH!

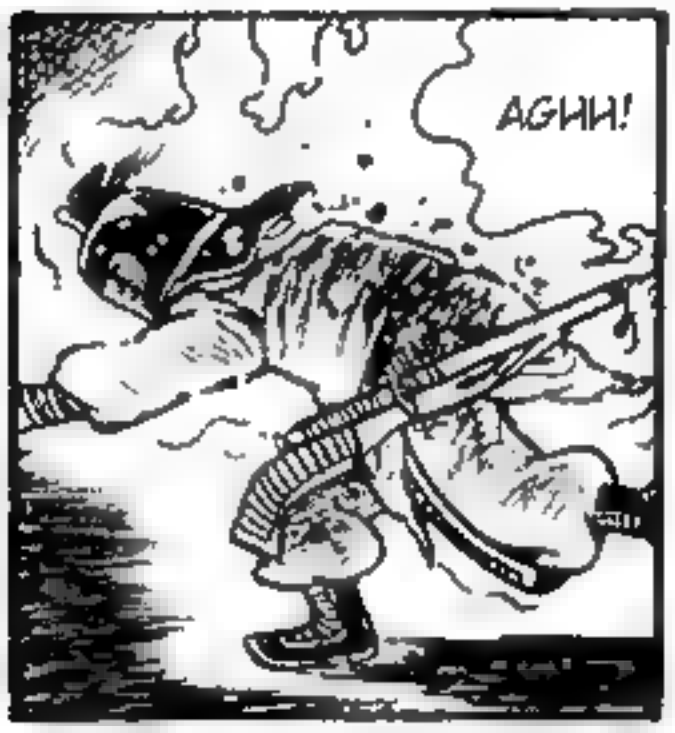
LET'S TAKE A LOOK.

T-THE ENEMIES MUST'VE SET UP COMBUSTIBLES BEFORE WE GOT HERE!


PUTTING OUT THE FIRE IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH THESE WINDS! HAVE THE MEN EVACUATE OUTSIDE XINYE!






AGHH!

ACK!

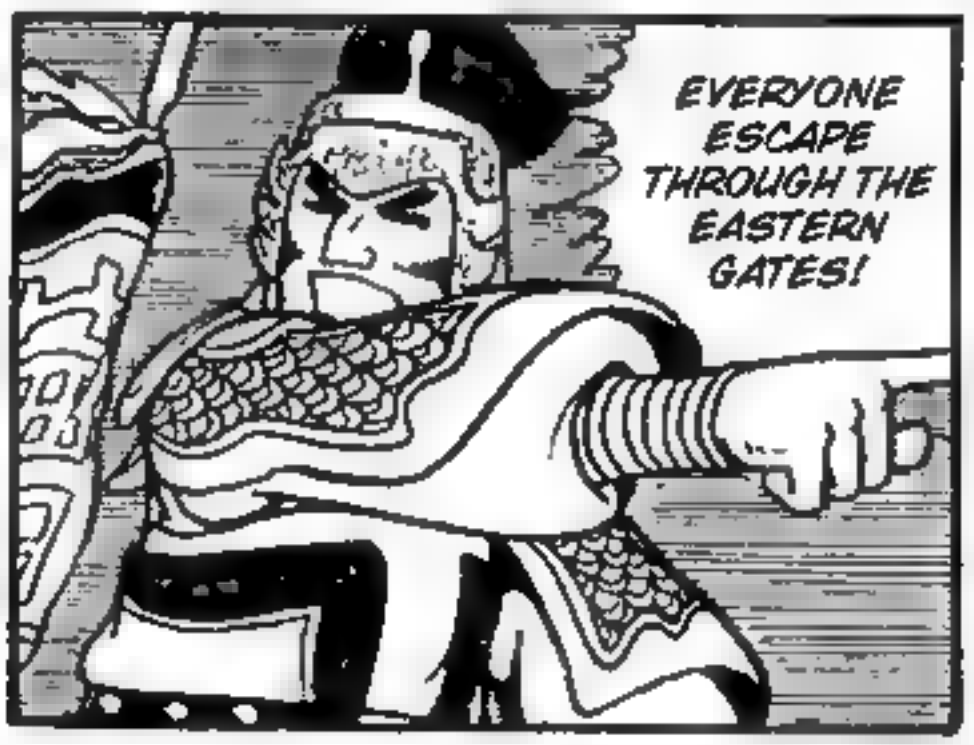
GAHHH!

GYAAA!

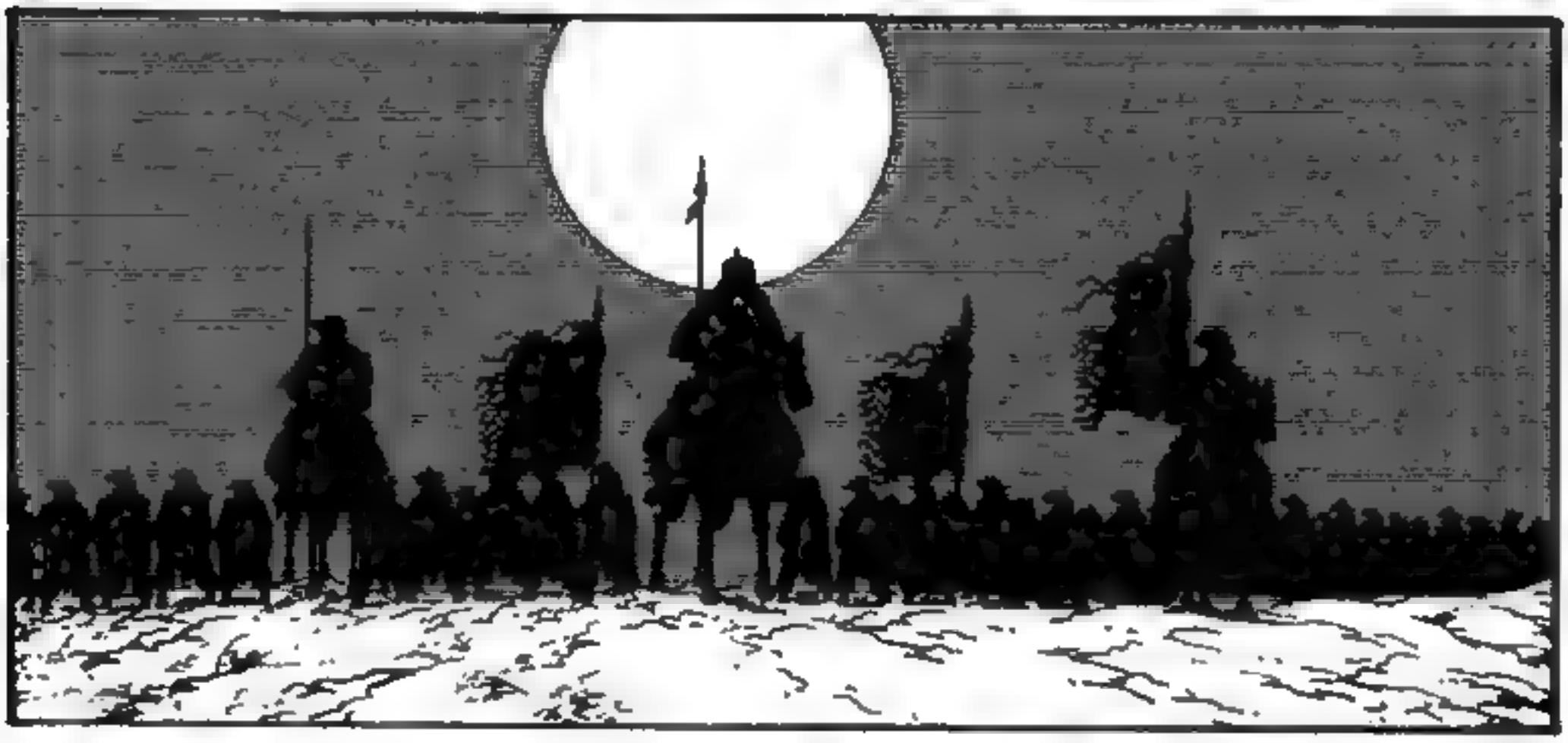
DAMN... WE MUST FIND A WAY OUT OF HERE NO MATTER WHAT!

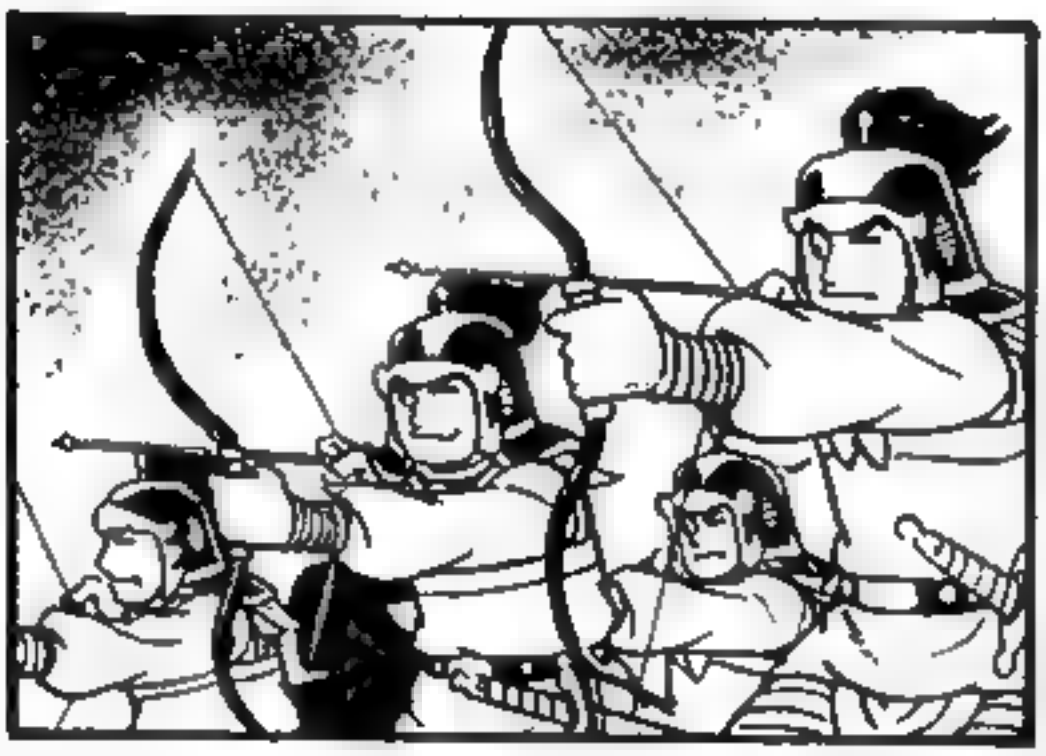
GENERAL CAO REN! THE NORTH, WEST, AND SOUTHERN GATES ARE ALREADY A SEA OF FIRE!

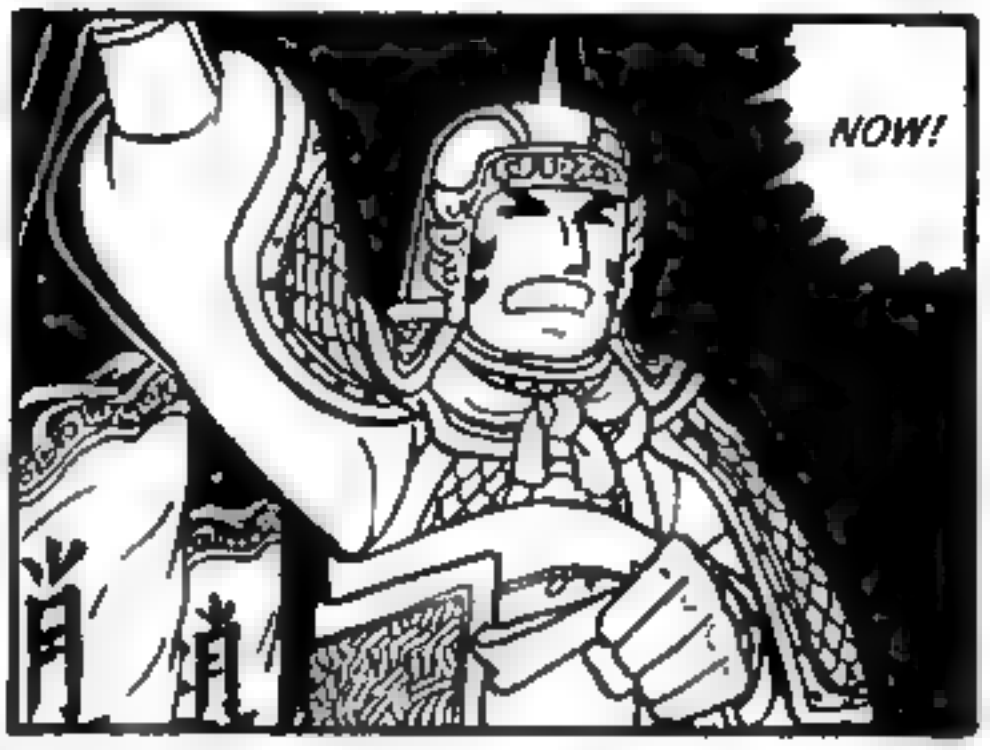
SIR! THE EASTERN GATES HAVEN'T CAUGHT ON FIRE YET!

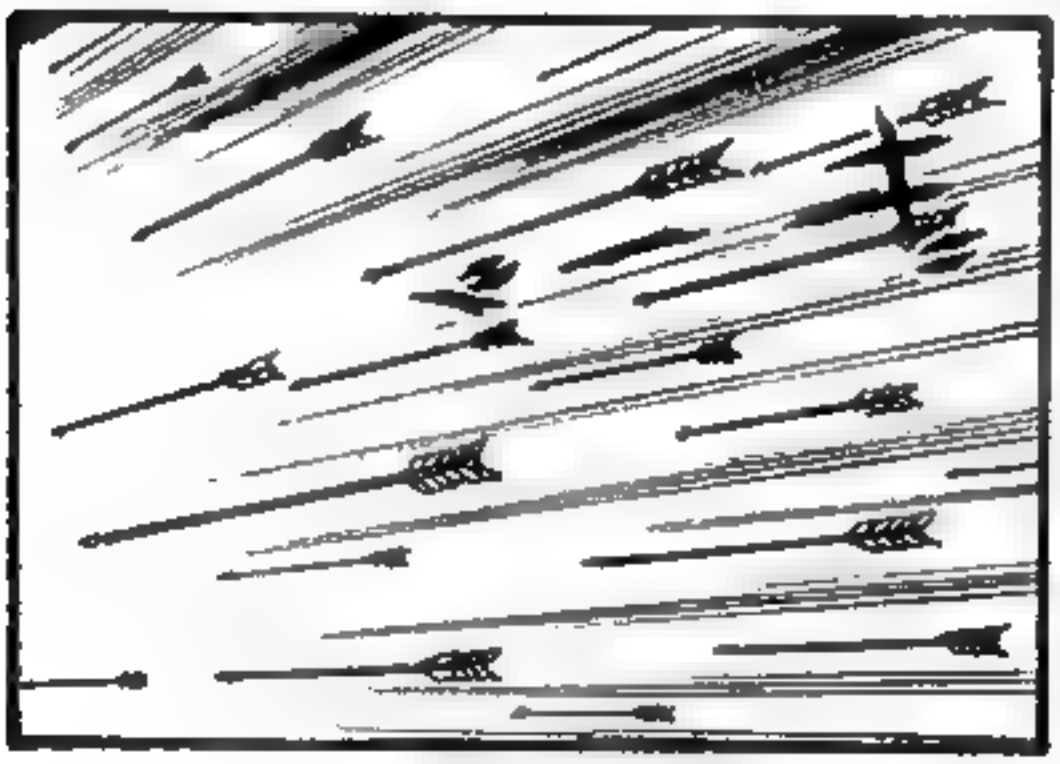

EVERYONE ESCAPE THROUGH THE EASTERN GATES!

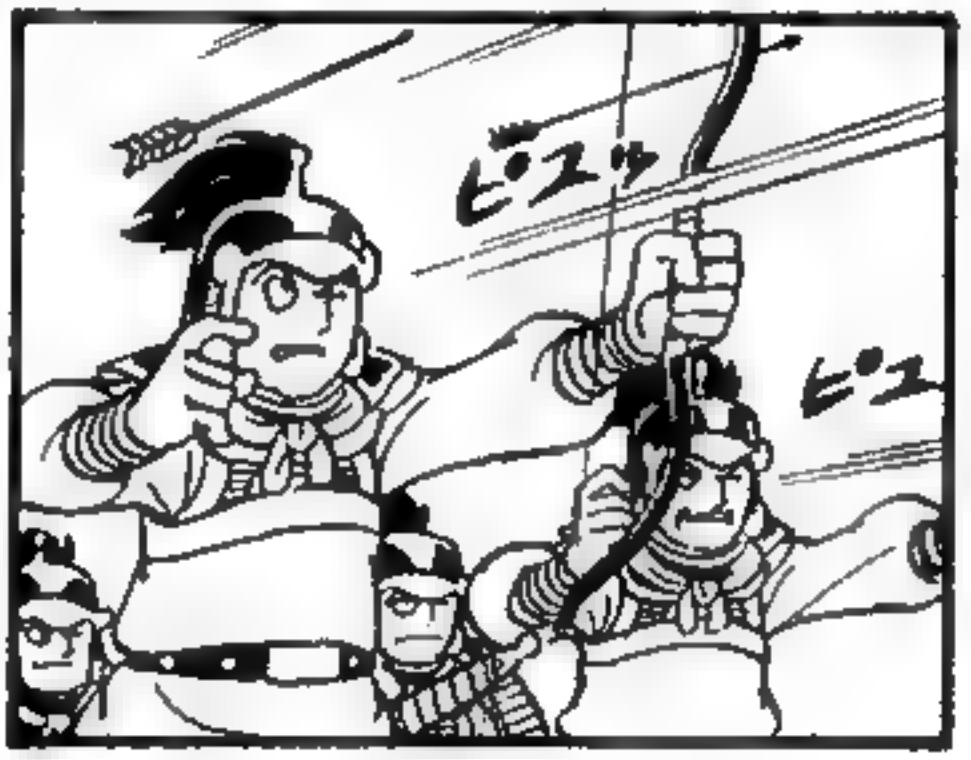
AH!






NOW!

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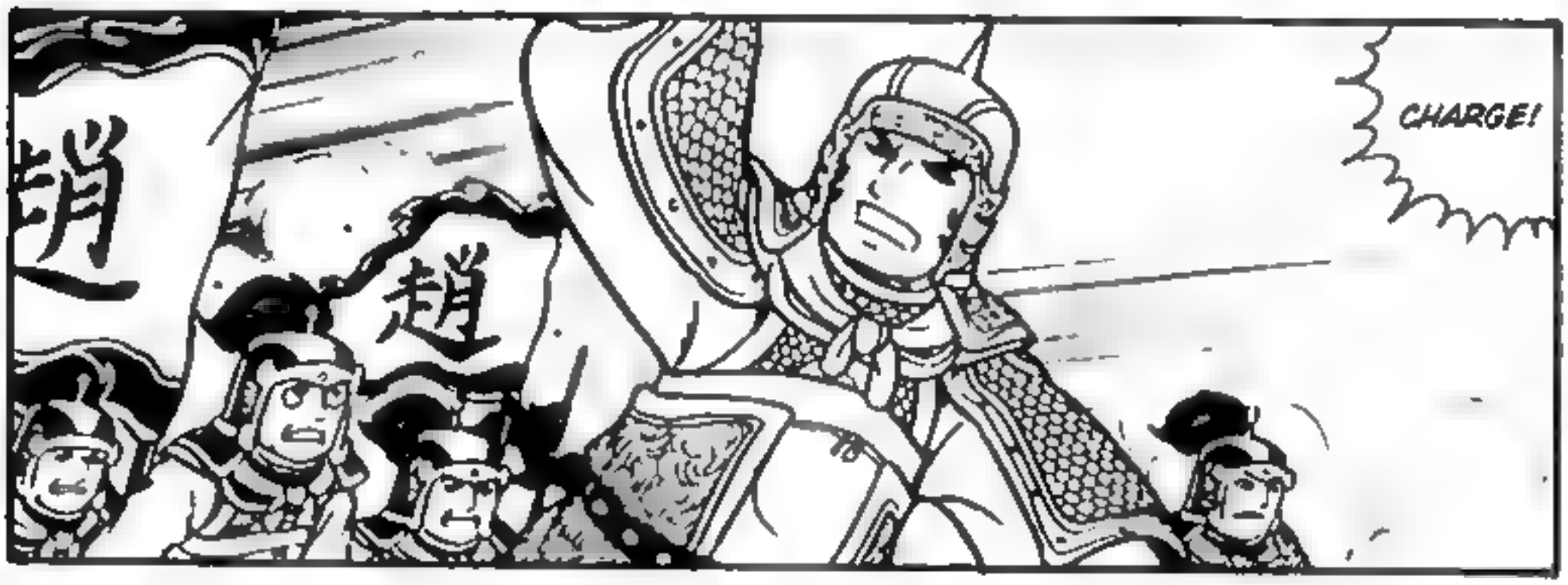
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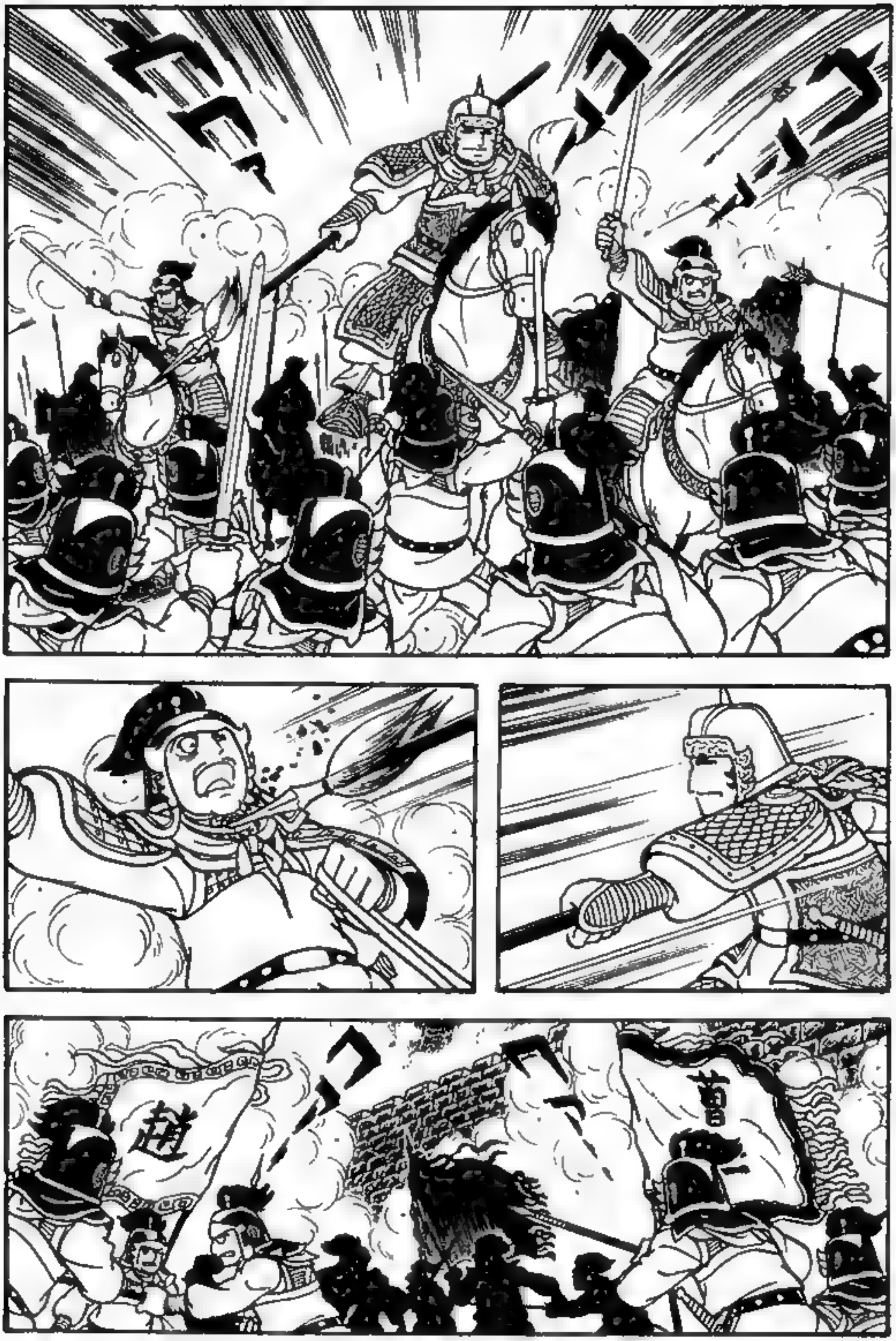
CHARGE!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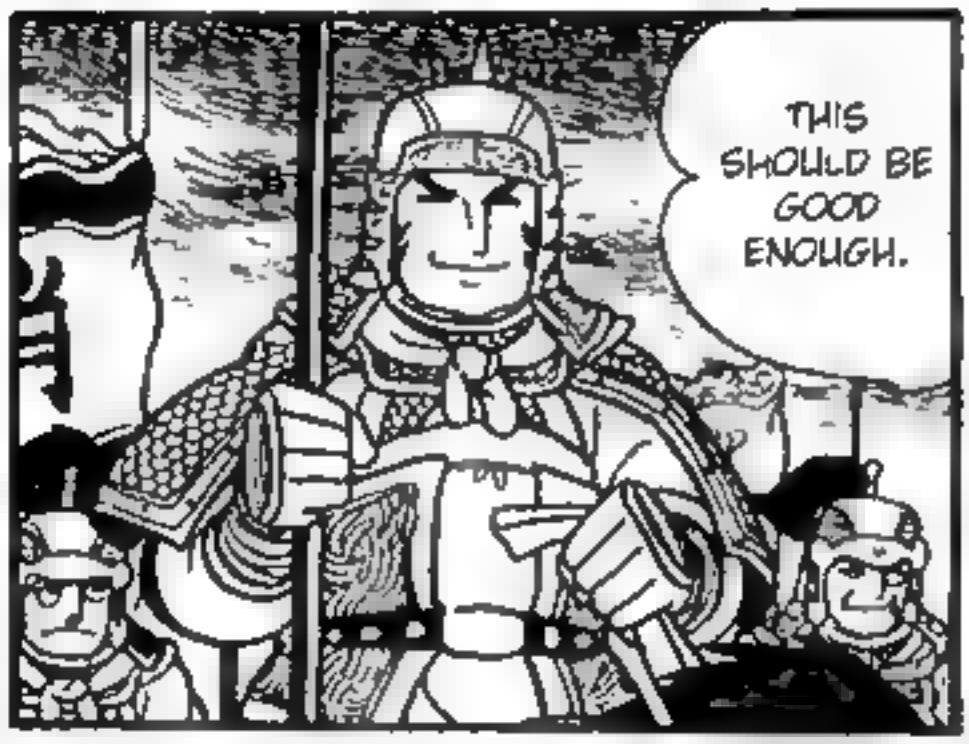
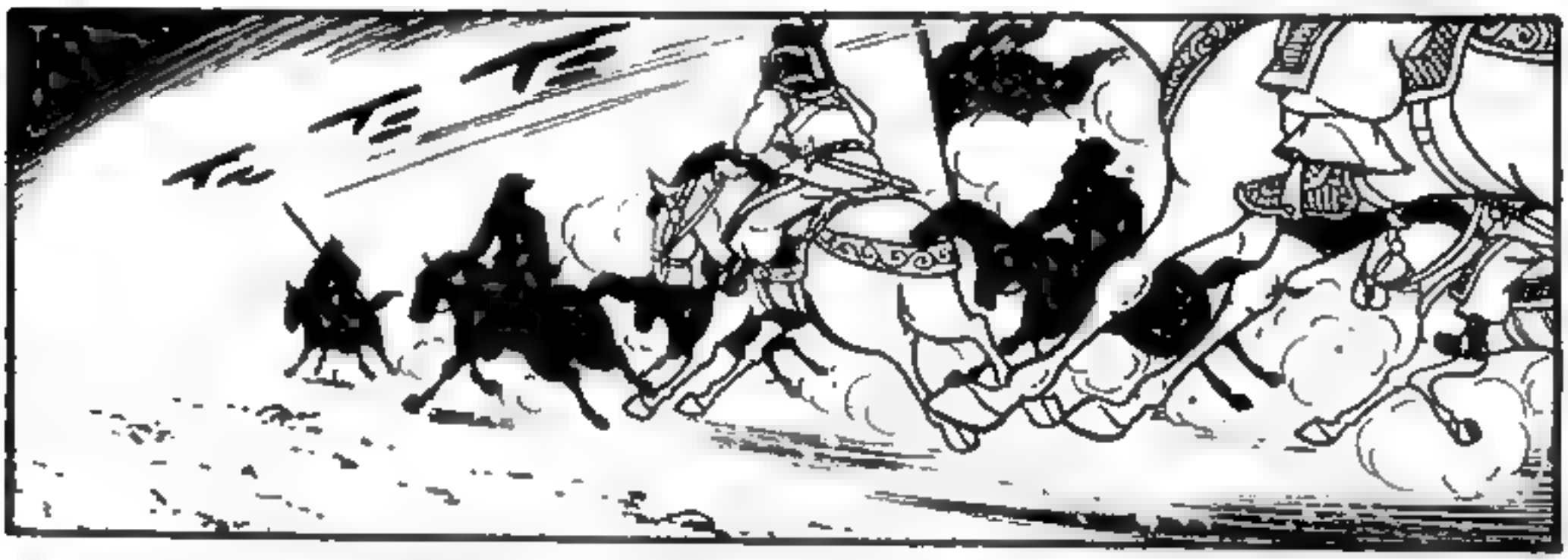
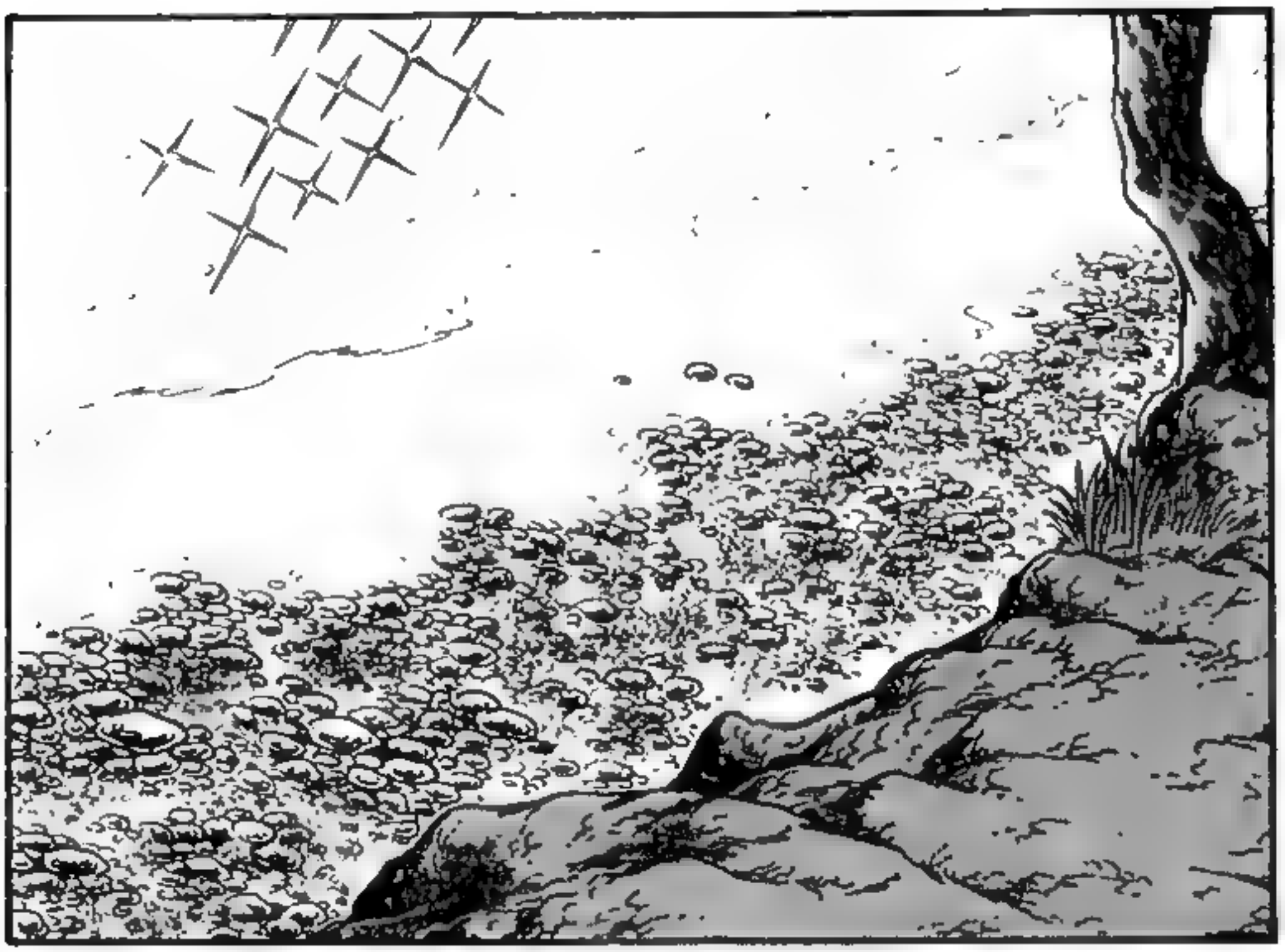
RETREAT!


THIS SHOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH.



WHEEZE
HUFF HUFF

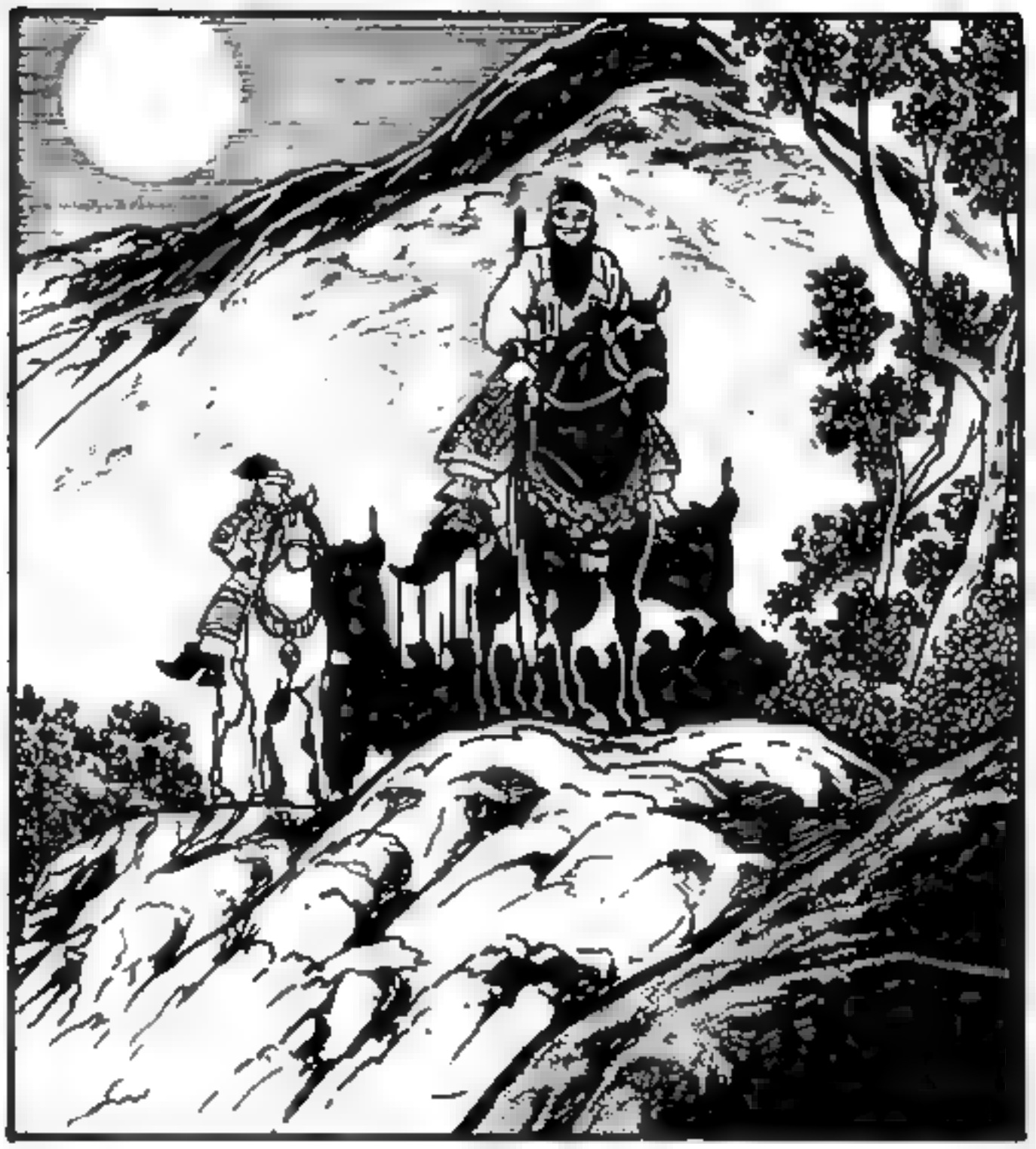


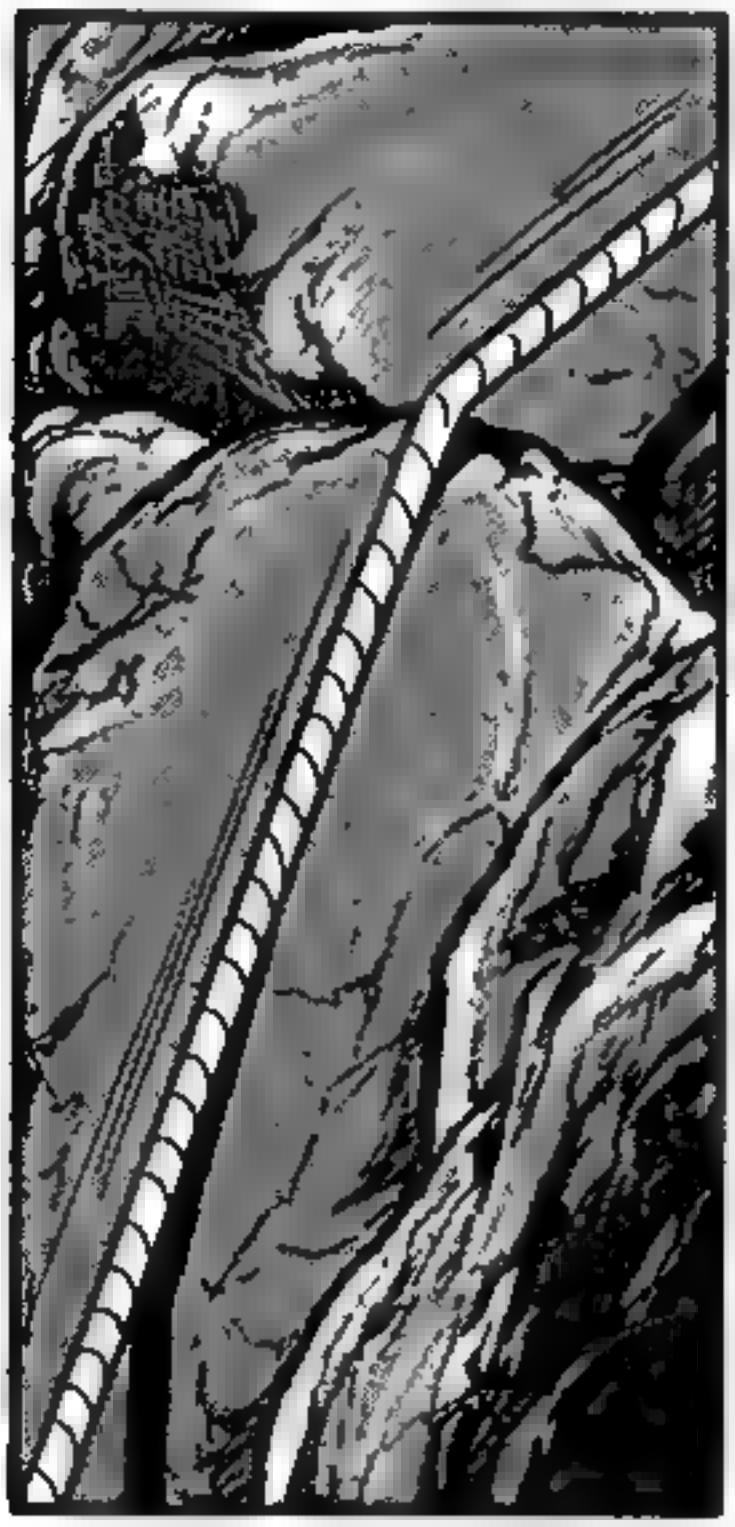
CROSS THE RIVER, TROOPS! THE ENEMIES SHAN'T PURSUE US PAST THE RIVER!

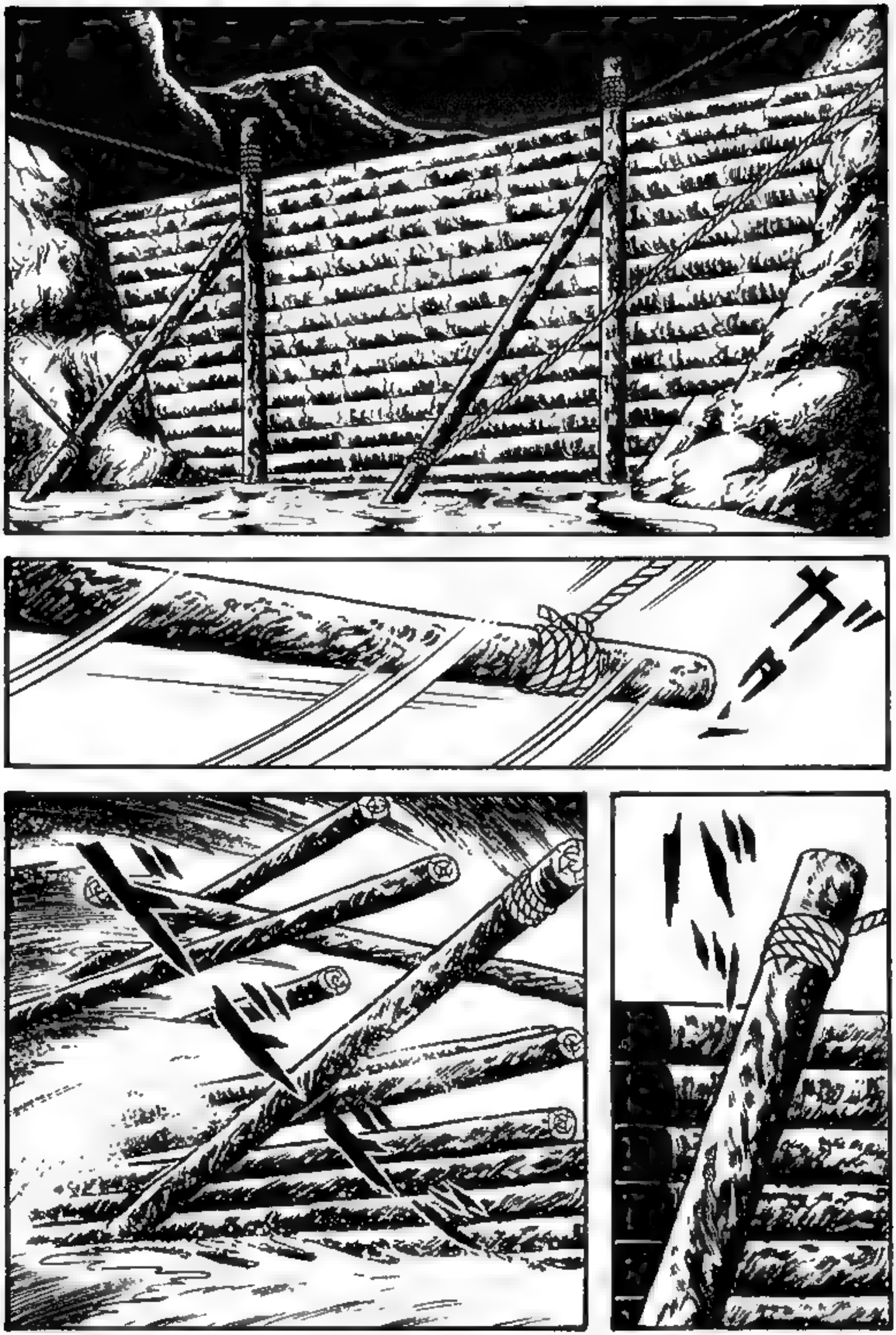
IT'S A RIVER!

SIR, I HEAR THE HOOF-STEPS AND SHOUTS OF THE ENEMY ARMY!

UNLEASH THE DAM!







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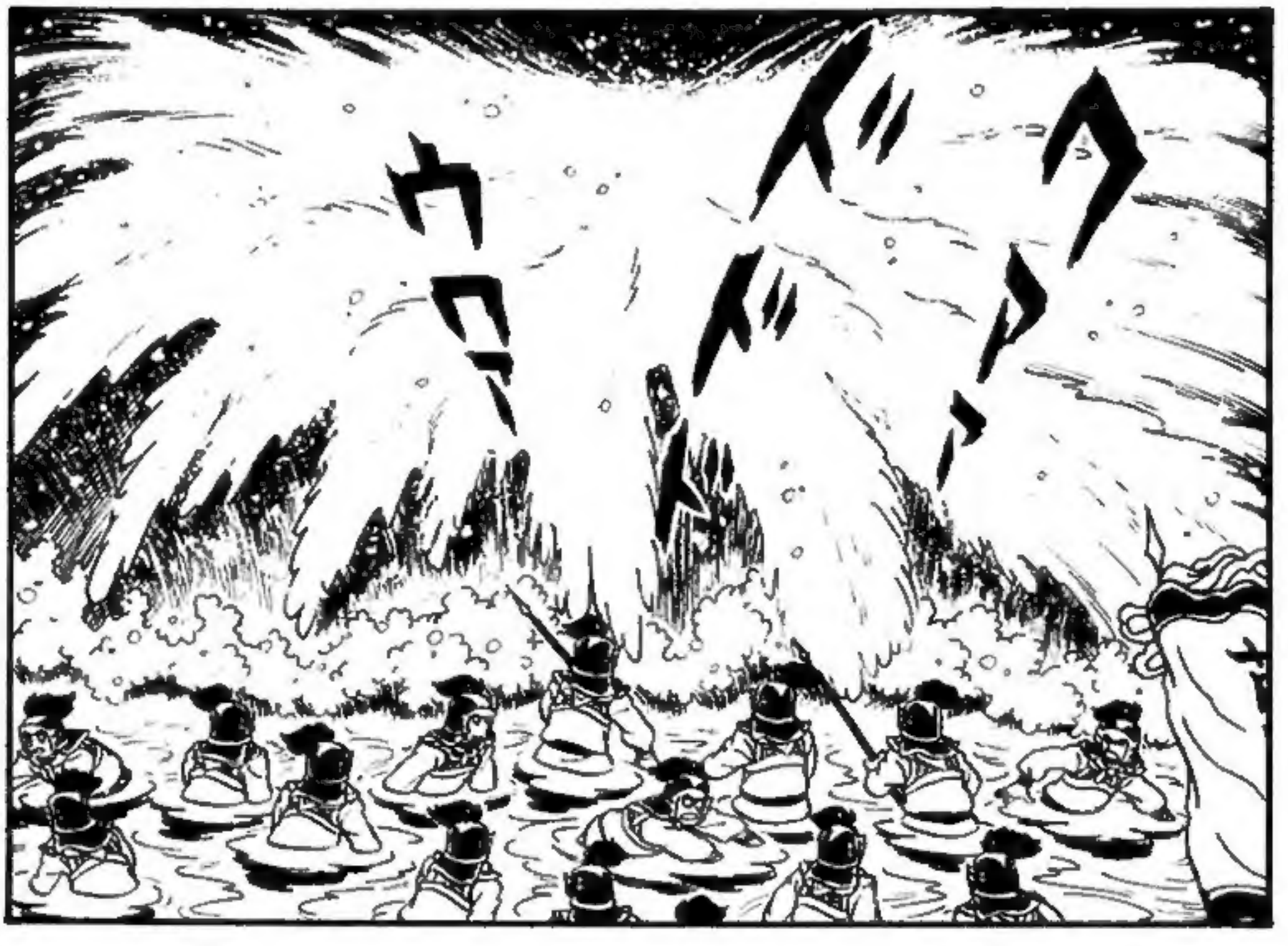
AGHH!

HM?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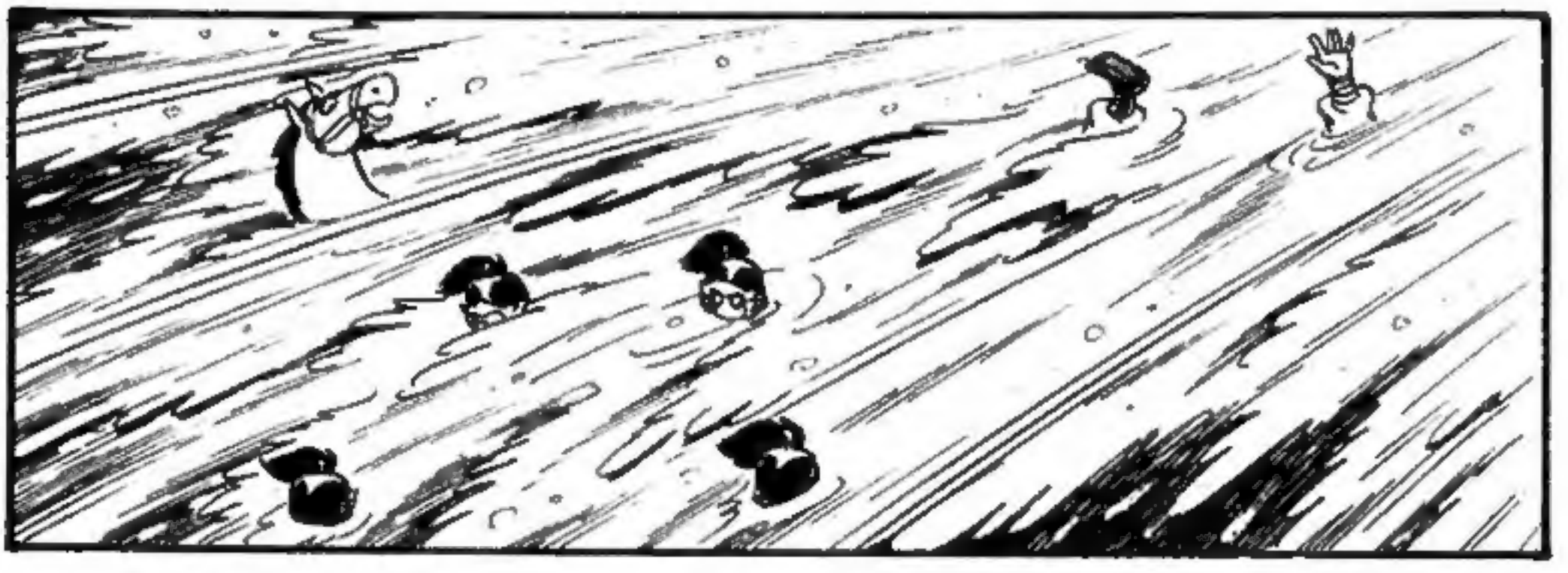
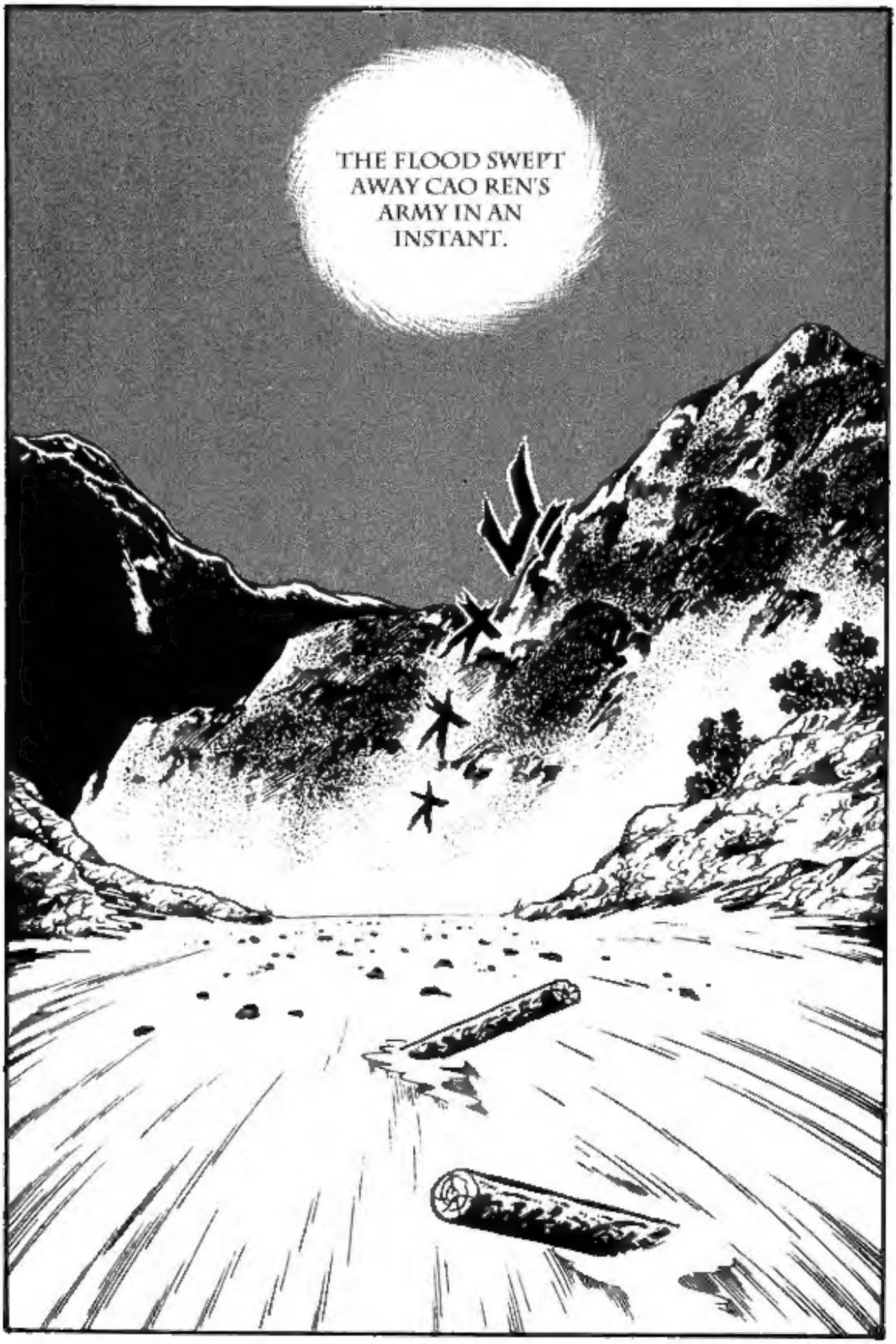


GYAAA!

AHH...!



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